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Pompeii: Daily Life in an Ancient Roman City

Course Guidebook

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Professor Tuck frequently gives public lectures on the classical world and for more than four years has served as a national lecturer for the Archaeological Institute of America, traveling around the country to give academic and popular lectures on archaeology and ancient art. He was also a regular lecturer for the Continuing Education program at the University of Evansville, presenting lectures on a vast range of topics, including ancient social and political history, archaeology, and public spectacle. He has conducted fieldwork in England, Italy, and Greece and has led more than 10 study tours to Italy and England. He has served a term as president of the Vergilian Society, an international academic organization, and is the author of many articles in international journals, including ones on the spectacle schedule at Pompeii, the decorative program of the amphitheater at Capua, and triumphal imagery across the ancient Roman world. He is the author of *Latin Inscriptions in the Kelsey Museum: The Dennison and De Criscio Collections*, published by the University of Michigan Press in 2006. ■

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Pompeii: Daily Life in an Ancient Roman City

Scope:

For centuries, Pompeii has been a popular destination and subject of study for people interested in cultural history. It has become one of the most famous and most visited archaeological sites in the world. This course is an introduction to the famous city for those planning a trip, for those who have been there, and for those who wish to visit vicariously. The course begins with a consideration of the place of Pompeii in our understanding of the Roman past and its unique role as a source of information about daily life in ancient Italy. It then considers the geological and topographical background of the city and the region of Campania.

The course takes us on a series of walks through Pompeii. We explore the city's principal roads, major civic and religious buildings, and different types of dwellings. In practical terms, each lecture can be viewed as a walk through one section of the city, whether Pompeii or Herculaneum, or a villa site. Those who plan to visit can recreate these walks themselves or select the spaces along them that they most want to visit. It is more than a walking tour of the city in its "last days," however. The goal of the course is to present a picture of the entire history of the city and the disparate experiences of its inhabitants, and to free us from the tyranny of studying only the Pompeii of the eruption of A.D. 79. The result is an appreciation that, to diverse people at various times, Pompeii represented a very different city. This course will introduce the key historical events and periods as well as the spaces and people of Pompeii.

The organization of this course is primarily seen through the experiences of a series of real inhabitants of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and the elite villas that surrounded them. This will enable us to explore the cities both geographically and at chronologically important periods. The goal is to present not just the final look of the urban environment but how it developed and what activities and lives took place within it. We will learn that the Pompeii of a slave girl differed dramatically from that of a visiting senator and examine the major differences between the city in earlier periods and in A.D. 79.

While the primary organization of the course is chronological, several themes are presented throughout, providing a structure that explores Etruscan, Greek, Samnite, and Roman cultural contributions to the makeup of the city; the social strata and genders of our ancient companions; and the economy of the city. Lectures 4 through 7 develop the theme of cultural contribution, which informs the material in later lectures as well. In terms of gender, the lives of women, who are almost absent from Roman history, can be studied in the city, and three interrelated lectures (Lectures 8, 9, and 10) explore moments in the lives of upper-, middle-, and lower-class women. We also explore major interactions between Pompeii and the wider Roman world, both regionally and with Rome itself, in political terms in Lectures 11 through 14. Lectures 15 and 16 provide an interlude to consider the economy, industry, and lives of workers in the region, themes that return in Lectures 18 and 19.

All of the lectures concerning the period after the earthquake of A.D. 62 explore the dramatic changes in population that occurred as a result of the disaster, the rise of a new class of rulers in the city, the retreat of the wealthy to their villas, and the changes visible in the tastes, values, and identities projected by the new local elites. We then experience, guided by an eyewitness account of the event, the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79 and the sudden burial of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and nearby villas. Finally, we consider the afterlife of the city. The deaths of some inhabitants are revealed along with the lives of the refugees from the city, some aided by the imperial government, and the possibility that they were resettled into other communities in northern Campania.

Through this course, we will see that Pompeii is so much more than the site of a tragedy; it is a unique window into daily life in an ancient Roman city. ■

Reflections on and of Pompeii

Lecture 1

“So many disasters have happened in the world, but none that has given so much pleasure to posterity. I can think of nothing more interesting.”

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

When we think of Pompeii, we think of its destruction. We are haunted by the story of an unsuspecting city, utterly destroyed yet so beautifully preserved that we still can walk its streets, visit its shops and homes, and recreate the lives of its people. But there is more to Pompeii than its last days. In this course, we will explore the famous city

from its origins through its many cultural transformations to its final destruction in A.D. 79. We can do this because Pompeii preserves, as almost no other archaeological site in the world does, evidence from all of the key periods of its history.

The facts of daily life are available to us at Pompeii as they are nowhere else in the ancient Mediterranean world. Part of this information comes from more than 50,000 pieces of writing found on Pompeii's walls, from legal announcements to advertisements to graffiti.

You may be surprised to learn how much of Pompeii's history occurred before the Romans arrived. The mysterious Etruscans came first, founding the city around 650 B.C. They were overrun by the warlike Samnites, one of Rome's chief rivals for control of the Italian Peninsula, in the 5th century B.C. Finally, the Romans colonized

the city in the 1st century B.C., imposing their identity and way of life. We will study each of these phases separately and chronologically early in the course, and you will see how these phases play out on a map of the site of Pompeii. This will set the stage for the rest of our explorations.

We will also spend some time on the cultural and political context of the region surrounding Pompeii on the Bay of Naples. Pompeii was something of a multicultural marvel in the ancient world, where Etruscan, Greek, Samnite, Italic, Egyptian, and Roman cultures met. It was home to some of the Roman Empire's most important citizens, such as **Cicero**, the great orator, and **Poppaea Sabina**, wife of Emperor **Nero**.

We will also study an often-overlooked phase of Pompeii's history: its rediscovery. This phase began in the 1590s with casual finds by local farmers. The sculptures they unearthed would be sent to Europe's great cities and help inspire the artists of the Renaissance. In 1748, the kings of Naples began the first large-scale excavations of the site. The excavations carried out over the next 250 years affect what we know, what we've lost, and what we can never know about the city.

Truly at Pompeii, the dead do speak.

Throughout the course, we will also look at the lives of real people who lived in Pompeii, discovering what their lives were like and how they were constrained by class and gender. We learn about their lives and their livelihoods, and we see what the Roman system meant to them, and how the experience of the city differed for each of these people. The facts of daily life are available to us at Pompeii as they are nowhere else in the ancient Mediterranean world. Part of this information comes from more than 50,000 pieces of writing found on Pompeii's walls, from legal announcements to advertisements to graffiti. This collection is unparalleled in the archaeological world. Truly at Pompeii, the dead do speak.

When we turn at last to the eruption of Vesuvius and the devastation that followed, we will see how Pompeii's fate differed from any other city in the region, such as that of **Herculaneum**, a mere eight miles away. We are fortunate to have an eyewitness to the destruction in **Pliny the Younger**, who was living in nearby **Misenum** at this time and wrote letters about the eruption to the historian **Tacitus**. Through these records, we have a clear picture of the three days from the eruption to the city's destruction. We will look at the fates of those who survived the disaster.

Note that much of the information and many of the images contained in these lectures come from Professor Tuck's personal studies at the Pompeii site. Over his 20 years of study, he has been granted special access to many of the closed areas of the site by Italy's archaeological authorities, to whom he offers his special thanks for making this course possible. ■

Names to Know

Cicero (a.k.a. Marcus Tullius Cicero; 106–43 B.C.): Roman author and politician of the late Republican period.

Nero (a.k.a. Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus; A.D. 37–68; r. A.D. 54–68): Fifth emperor of Rome; his Domus Transitoria and Domus Aurea palaces influenced interior decoration at Pompeii.

Pliny the Younger (a.k.a. **Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus**; A.D. 61/62–c. 113): Roman statesman and author who, as a teen, wrote letters to Tacitus containing an eyewitness account of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

Poppaea Sabina (d. A.D. 65): Second wife of Nero and a native of Pompeii. Her marriage led to an outpouring of support for Nero's rule among the Pompeians.

Tacitus (A.D. 56–c. 120): Roman historian and correspondent of Pliny the Younger; author of the *Annals* and the *Histories*, which cover Roman history from the death of Augustus to that of Domitian.

Suggested Reading

Mattusch, *Pompeii and the Roman Villa*.

Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*.

Questions to Consider

1. Other than its fame, what has Pompeii contributed to our knowledge of the Roman world?
2. Does Pompeii represent a typical Roman city or something else that makes it even more important to our understanding of ancient Italy?

Geology and Geography on the Bay of Naples

Lecture 2

All this volcanic activity shaped the Bay of Naples and became the setting for the major harbors that made this the most important port in ancient Italy.

In this lecture, we look at the geology that created the land around the Bay of Naples, specifically and especially plate tectonics; the physical geography that resulted from those violent geological forces; and the human cultural geography, the interaction among the Romans, Etruscans, Greeks, and Samnites in this region. Each of these factors contributed to the character of Pompeii.

The coastline of the Bay of Naples is extremely irregular, dotted with natural harbors, crater lakes, and hills breaking up the surrounding mountain range. This landscape is the result of tectonic activity on the boundary between the African and Eurasian plates, creating what is called a **convergent zone**. The African Plate dives under the Eurasian Plate, and the Eurasian Plate cracks, resulting in massive seismic activity, tremendous earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. This zone has been active for more than 400,000 years and is still active today; in Puteoli, on the north side of the bay, the coastal elevation regularly shifts by as much as three feet.

Mount Vesuvius sprang up in this zone about 25,000 years ago; today, it is the only active volcano on the European continent, and its eruptive history runs from at least 18,000 B.C. to the present day. Currently standing about 3,000 feet high, before the eruption in A.D. 79, it was 6,000 feet high. The bay itself was created by the explosion and collapse of an even larger ancient volcano. We can see the remnants of its rim in the curve of the bay and the surrounding islands, including Capri, Ischia, and Procida. But all of this activity occurred in a very contained area. Just a few miles from the bay, at the ancient city of Cumae, lie miles of low, flat beaches undisturbed by tectonic violence.

So why did people choose to live in this unstable region during antiquity, and why do people still live there today? Both now and then, the fertile volcanic soils, many hot springs, and excellent harborage—all caused by this very instability—draw people to the region despite the risks.



An 1836 map of the Bay of Naples.

The Bay of Naples region underwent successive waves of settlement throughout antiquity. The Greeks were the first Western inhabitants, arriving by sea and settling first on the Island of Ischia. From there, they moved to the mainland, establishing Cumae, Herculaneum, Dicaearchia (modern Pozzuoli), and Neapolis (modern Naples) around the north of the bay, stopping where Mount Vesuvius bisects the coast. The **Etruscans** settled Capua in direct competition with Cumae, then filled the coast south of Vesuvius with colonies at Pompeii, Nola, Nuceria, and Stabiae. Both groups of settlers brought their cultures with them: language and religion, art and

architecture. And rather than conflict, we see a pattern of cultural exchange and trade within the region.

The **Samnites** began settling the region a few centuries later. We know little about the Samnites, except that they were an Italic people who came down from the foothills of the Apennines in the 5th century B.C.

Finally, of course, the Romans arrived, starting in the late 4th century B.C. They initially came for military purposes, particularly to defend the rest of the Italian Peninsula during the Punic Wars with Carthage and later Social War versus the Socii. But as was typical for Rome, where the military went, the civilians followed. New roads and aqueducts spurred commercial activity. And where the money and the military and the infrastructure were, the government followed.

At this time, Puteoli was the bay's major harbor—the Roman Republic's second largest and second most important city—with smaller harbors at Pompeii, Naples, Herculaneum, and Cumae. The Roman navy was headquartered at Puteoli, and much of the city of Rome's trade flowed through the Bay of Naples, bringing with it the cultures of Egypt, North Africa, and the Near East—Saint Paul even came through Puteoli, spreading Christianity. This rich cultural mixture defined the Bay of Naples as the most culturally diverse and dynamic area of ancient Italy. ■

Today, in fact, there are probably three million living in that same area that in antiquity the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 covered.

Important Terms

convergent zone: Point where two tectonic plates meet; often a seismically and volcanically active area.

Etruscans: Italic, pre-Roman settlers of the Italian Peninsula who had a strong influence on Roman culture and who founded the city of Pompeii.

Samnites: Ancient Italic people of central Italy who first allied with and then warred with the Romans.

Suggested Reading

de Vivo, ed., *Volcanism in the Campania Plain*.

Sigurdsson, “The Environmental and Geomorphological Context of the Volcano.”

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways did the geology of the area encourage settlement on the slopes of a volcano?
2. How did the Bay of Naples operate as a crossroads of Italy and the central Mediterranean in antiquity?

The Rediscovery of Vesuvian Lands

Lecture 3

We know an amazing amount about the city of Pompeii. ... Yet what we know—and what we can never know—is the product of how, when, and who dug the site over the past 250 years.

The methods and desires of the individuals who dug at the site of Pompeii during the past 250 years have shaped the site through destruction and neglect as well as care and preservation. The earliest discoveries in the area were not associated with the long-forgotten cities of Pompeii or Herculaneum but were chance finds. The kings of Naples quickly claimed personal ownership of these materials and used them to bolster their cultural credentials among their European allies and rivals.

King **Charles VII of Naples** (later Charles III of Spain) was the first to sponsor large-scale excavations at Pompeii, while King **Ferdinand IV of Naples** is responsible for the largest excavations. Most of the finds went into the kings' private collections. Statues, panel paintings, and mosaics were pulled whole from the buildings, with few or no records kept as to where they were found; thus we have lost their original settings and contexts. In addition, to keep the value of the finds high, many duplicate materials were destroyed, so only the best example of, say, a bust of Augustus or a mosaic of Alexander survives. The site was also quarried for building stone, demolishing many unique and well-preserved buildings. We cannot even begin to calculate the scale of the loss.

Targeted excavation and directed exploration [are] the norm at Pompeii, thanks to the work of Fiorelli.

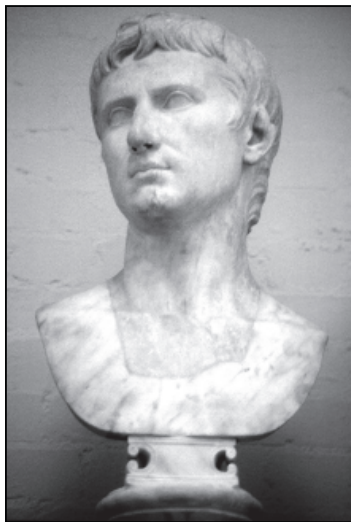
One of the most important finds of this period was the Villa of the Papyri, which was excavated in the 1750s. It contained the largest collection of sculptures ever found at any ancient site in the Mediterranean world, and it contained the only library preserved from antiquity, which held many ancient manuscripts previously only known through medieval translations. About

1,800 papyrus scrolls were recovered from the site, about 800 of which have so far been unrolled and read. Some were destroyed by site workers who, unaware of their importance, burned them for light or heat. Some others were destroyed in early attempts to unroll them.

In 1860, **Giuseppe Fiorelli** was named director of the excavations at Pompeii, and everything changed. His vision was to make Pompeii a monument of Italian national identity, and his revolutionary idea was to focus on information and preservation, rather than wealth. Thus he began making maps of the site and recording the findspots. This means that artifacts with no commercial value, such as carbonized loaves of bread from a baker's oven, were preserved along with the valuable artworks. Fiorelli's map, divided into nine numbered regions with every block and doorway numbered, is still used today. He also founded a training school for excavators and was involved in transitioning the collection from private to public display in the National Archaeological Museum (Museo Archeologico Nazionale) in Naples.

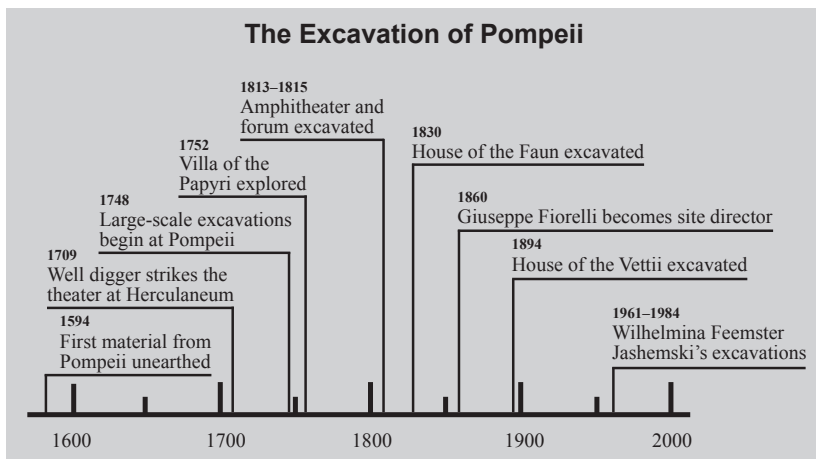
Fiorelli was not above using a touch of propaganda to rally popular support for his techniques. He created from whole cloth the famous story about the discovery of a Roman soldier's skeleton at the Herculean Gate, a guard who remained at his post even as the ash buried him. The story is still told today by the site's guides.

Finally, Fiorelli instituted the plaster cast system. Much of the organic material at Pompeii—including bodies—was exposed to oxygen through the layers of porous ash and pumice, leaving only a void where the material had



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Much of the artwork discovered in early excavations of Pompeii was deliberately destroyed to increase the value of the surviving pieces.



been. It was Fiorelli's idea to use these voids as molds, filling them with plaster of Paris and creating a unique and poignant collection of figures.

Amedeo Maiuri became site director in 1924, and he was responsible for the first excavations below the A.D. 79 level. Maiuri shared Fiorelli's mind-set and focus on information-oriented archaeology and careful preservation.

Wilhelmina Jashemski was an American archaeologist and a professor at the University of Maryland whose work at the Pompeii site created the discipline of garden archaeology. She applied Fiorelli's cast process to plant remains, so that original plantings could be identified and Pompeii's gardens, farms, and vineyards could be restored to their A.D. 79 state.

As we move through the course and through the site of Pompeii, it is important to remember that our experience of the city was shaped as much by its excavators as by its ancient inhabitants. ■

Names to Know

Charles VII of Naples (1716–1788; r. 1734–1759): Monarch under whom Pompeii was rediscovered and first excavated.

Ferdinand IV of Naples (1751–1825; r. 1759–1816): First monarch to order large-scale excavations of the Vesuvian lands and have the finds placed in a major museum.

Giuseppe Fiorelli (1823–1896): Italian patriot and archaeologist made Pompeii's site director in 1860; he founded the National Archaeological Museum at Naples and created the plaster-casting system.

Wilhelmina Jashemski (1910–2007): American archaeologist, inventor of landscape archaeology; excavated and restored the green spaces of Pompeii.

Suggested Reading

Berry, "Rediscovering Pompeii's Buried Past."

Cooley, "The Reawakening."

Foss, "Rediscovery and Resurrection."

Parslow, *Rediscovering Antiquity*.

Questions to Consider

1. How does the period in which a building was excavated limit what we can know about it today?
2. What changes did Giuseppe Fiorelli make to Pompeii that we can still see today?

Etruscan Pompeii—5th Century B.C.

Lecture 4

If you look at a plan of the city of Pompeii, what you see is its strong resemblance to Etruscan cities that we know of from other places.

In this lecture, we upend the traditional focus on the last days of Pompeii to examine its first days. The Greeks were the first to settle in the area, in the 770s B.C. The Etruscans soon followed, first settling at Capua and then at Pompeii. Although technically in competition with the Greeks for resources and trade, the Etruscans were a culturally inclusive people who borrowed liberally from Greek culture.

The oldest parts of Pompeii, known by the archaeologists' term *Altstadt*, clearly follow the Etruscan model. Unlike a Greek city, with a hilltop acropolis and residences in the valley below, all of Pompeii was built on the high ground, surrounded by a wall—a highly defensible location that could control the Sarno River Valley. Only the farmland lay outside the walls. The city's layout was irregular, unlike a Greek city. And the name Pompeii parallels Etruscan naming practices, as seen in cities like Veii, Volsinii, and Tarquinii.

The road that today leads from the site's ticket booth into the city is, we believe, the same route the ancient Pompeians took up from the mouth of the Sarno. The Roman walls visible today were built on top of the remains of the Etruscan walls. Inside those walls, one of the first buildings you see is the Sanctuary of Venus, the patron goddess of the Roman city. Beneath that structure is a sanctuary to the Italic or Samnite goddess **Mephitis**, dating to the 6th or 5th century B.C. Mephitis was the personification of the gases and vapors from volcanoes, so her significance here is obvious.

Despite the volcanic gases that are coming out here ... even at the very beginning ... the site is important and attractive enough that a city is founded on it.

The Sanctuary of Apollo lies on the highest spot in the *Altstadt*. Apollo, along with Hercules, was widely worshiped by Greeks and Etruscans in this region. This is the oldest Etruscan temple in Pompeii, probably built in the 6th century B.C. It is Etrusco-Italic in design, with a small podium, a single flight of stairs in front, and an interior divided into a frontal porch and a rear **cella**, which housed the cult statue. Greek-style pottery inscribed with Etruscan writing has been found in the temple's **votive pit**. The area that would become the Roman forum in the center of the city was undeveloped in the Etruscan period and may have been a marketplace.

Just outside the walls, on the opposite side of the city from the sanctuaries of Mephitis and Apollo, is the Triangular Forum. Here we find a temple on a platform, projecting the city's identity toward the Sarno River Valley. Today called the Doric Temple, it was the largest temple ever built at Pompeii, almost five times the size of Apollo's, and it is the only Greek-style temple found at the site. Its colonnade of Doric columns surrounds a small, circular building called a *tholos*, which in turn surrounds a very deep well, indicating that animal sacrifices were performed here.

Not much of the site remains because it was one of the first areas excavated by the kings of Naples. The most interesting remaining feature is a line of blocks at the base of the *cella* inscribed with Greek letters, indicating that the temple was likely constructed by Greek architects. But the terra-cotta images of Minerva (often associated with Hercules worship) indicate the involvement of Etruscan craftsmen, too.

Why are we concentrating on religious spaces in our exploration of early Pompeii? Because religion tends to be culturally conservative, and even



The Temple of Apollo at Paestum, Italy, is a Greek-style building similar to one that once stood at Pompeii.

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when a space is destroyed, it is often rebuilt in the same or similar fashion. Temples are often the oldest buildings at any archaeological site. ■

Important Terms

Altstadt: German for “old town”; Pompeii’s original area of settlement.

cella: Part of a temple that housed the image of the god or goddess.

Mephitis: Italic goddess of poisonous vapors and noxious odors.

votive pit: Part of a temple where offerings were thrown.

Suggested Reading

Berry, “Birth and Growth of a Roman Town.”

Carafa, “Recent Work on Early Pompeii.”

Cooley and Cooley, “Pre-Roman Pompeii.”

Ling, “Pompeii before the Romans.”

Questions to Consider

1. How does the religious identity of Pompeii support the theory of an Etruscan origin for the city?
2. Can we find parallels for the name, urban organization, or location of Pompeii in other Etruscan communities?

Samnite Pompeii—2nd Century B.C.

Lecture 5

What the Samnites have done here is laid out their new city, but they've also integrated themselves into the old city.

The rich coastal communities founded by the Etruscans and the Greeks throughout the 8th, 7th, and 6th centuries B.C. were invaded by the Samnites in the 5th century B.C. In this lecture, we look at Pompeii in 150 B.C. to see how Samnite culture had expanded and redefined the city.

Although obscure today, the Samnites were once among the Romans' chief rivals. In the 5th century B.C., for unknown reasons, they came from Saepinum and Beneventum in the foothills of the Apennines and conquered all of the communities surrounding the Bay of Naples, bringing their own culture and language. But like the Etruscans, they had an appreciation for Greek architecture. The Samnites greatly expanded Pompeii using Greek forms of city planning. We know which sections were built by the Samnites because of inscriptions in these structures that include Samnite names and mention Samnite forms of government.

The Samnites were the first to build in the open, central area of the city that would become the forum. On the north side, they built the Italic-style Temple of Jupiter sometime in the 4th or 3rd century B.C. The exterior is made of plaster over rubble, designed to imitate Greek **ashlar** building stones. It is placed directly in line with Mount Vesuvius, which in this period was twice as tall as it is today. Unlike the Etruscans, whose temples projected cultural identity outward, this structure seems to impose a cultural identity on the city's inhabitants—the behavior of conquerors.

“Basilica” is a Latin term derived from the Greek word for king, basileus, and a basilica imitates a columned hall the Greeks adopted from the Persians.

The second Samnite building in this section of the city is the **basilica**, arguably the most important building ever found at Pompeii. Sitting in the far southwest corner, it seems to establish the southern forum as a civic zone paralleling the northern forum's religious zone.

“Basilica” is a Latin term derived from the Greek word for king, *basileus*, and a basilica imitates a columned hall the Greeks adopted from the Persians. In a sense, the basilica's presence symbolizes Pompeii as a cultural crossroads—Samnite occupiers of an Etruscan city building a Greek-style structure based on a Persian royal hall.

The basilica at Pompeii is the oldest example we have of this basilica form. At over 100 feet long, it is the largest building at Pompeii of this or any other period. It contains a tribunal, or high platform, on which judges sat to hear legal cases. The columns are Corinthian, with a faux pediment like one sees on the porch of a Greek temple. The construction is of rubble, plastered and fluted to look like marble and masonry.

Beyond the old Etruscan walls, the Samnites built a Greek-style theater, called the Large Theater, in the 4th century B.C., indicating that their interest in Greek cultural forms extended to performing arts as well.

In terms of residential spaces, the House of Sallust is the best-preserved example of a Samnite dwelling. A simple building dating to the same period as the Temple of Jupiter and the Large Theater, it is a single-story home with a central **atrium** that opens onto all the other domestic rooms. A garden space surrounds the whole building, and a wall surrounds the garden. It has a line of shops along the street front and even a shop-like counter in the front hall of the home. The household is clearly an economic unit within the city.

The Samnite language, Oscan, could easily have been the mother tongue of much of Western Europe.

The facade is designed to impress, with real ashlar blocks, not plastered fakes, flanking the 15-foot doorway. This is also the earliest known example

of a house with a ***tablinum*** off the atrium. Both this display of wealth and this room combination is associated with the Romans, but this is an earlier, Italic example. The interior walls are plastered, carved rubble again, just like the public buildings of the period, in emulation of the Greeks. The walls are divided into three panels both horizontally and vertically in the Etruscan style. There is a small working garden off the back of the house, which is an Italic feature.

Thus the Samnites seemed to value the Greek and Etruscan cultures around the Bay of Naples, even as they conquered the people who created them. ■

Important Terms

ashlar: Large hewn stones of solid rock.

atrium: Main room in a Roman home, usually lavishly decorated and containing a decorative pool.

basilica: Roman hall used for law courts, civil administration, and business; typically had a central hall, flanking aisles, a porch on one end, and a raised tribunal on the other.

***tablinum*:** Room between the atrium and peristyle or garden of a Roman house that served as an office and reception space for the head of the household.

Suggested Reading

Berry, “Birth and Growth of a Roman Town.”

Cooley and Cooley, “Pre-Roman Pompeii.”

Zanker, “The Hellenistic City of the Oscans.”

Questions to Consider

1. Where in the Samnite city do we see reflections of Hellenistic culture?
2. Given the Greek, Etruscan, and Samnite cultural influences at Pompeii, how can it be seen as an example of an Italic cultural koine?

Building the Roman Colony—80 B.C.

Lecture 6

With the foundation of the Roman colony in 80 B.C., we see the imposition of Roman urban and social forms on the city ... Roman constructions that are designed to reflect Roman cultural identity.

We are fortunate to have the names of the two men largely responsible for the construction of the Roman colony at Pompeii: **Gaius Quinctius Valgus** and **Marcus Porcius**. They were the city's *duoviri*, or chief magistrates, in 80 B.C.

The 160 years from the founding of the Roman colony in 80 B.C. to its destruction by Vesuvius in A.D. 79 is the best-understood period in the life of Pompeii. It began with the brutal **Social War** (92–88 B.C.) conducted by the Roman dictator **Sulla** against the **Socii**, or Roman allies, who had been the backbone of the Roman army for about 300 years and had been agitating for full Roman citizenship for 100 years.

The Socii ... were about as Roman as you could be without being Roman citizens.

In 92 B.C., the callous remarks of a Roman official at the Samnite city of Asculum sparked a riot in which the official and all of the local Roman citizens were killed. The Romans retaliated, and so began the war. The sides were well matched, but it was the scorched-earth policies of Sulla that won the war for Rome, including his siege of Pompeii in 89 B.C. After the war, Rome colonized the Samnite territory, which in Roman terms meant stationing a demobilized unit of veterans in each city—effectively an occupation. Sulla placed his nephew, Publius Sulla, in charge of Pompeii in 80 B.C. At this point, the imposition of Roman urban and social forms on the city began.

The House of the Faun, where Publius Sulla lived, was originally two houses built in the Samnite period. Its name comes from the faun statue that was the first thing a guest would see upon entering the atrium, a Dionysiac image

that demonstrates how Greek culture held on even in the highest strata of Pompeii society.

Every morning, the *duoviri* Valgus and Porcius would be expected to visit Publius Sulla and perform the *salutatio*. The House of the Faun had a second *tablinum*, or reception area, beyond the first *tablinum* and at the back of the peristyle garden. Here the *duoviri* would find Publius Sulla standing on the floor mosaic of Alexander the Great, another obvious nod to Greek culture and history.

After their visit to Publius Sulla, Valgus and Porcius would move through the city, supervising the renovation of the Etruscan and Samnite buildings into Roman forms. In particular, the central area of the city took on the form of

a true Roman forum. The Temple of Jupiter became a *capitolium* dedicated to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. The Romans constructed a colonnade around the forum to define the space, creating the illusion of rectilinear order and, more importantly, imposing Roman cultural and political identity on it.

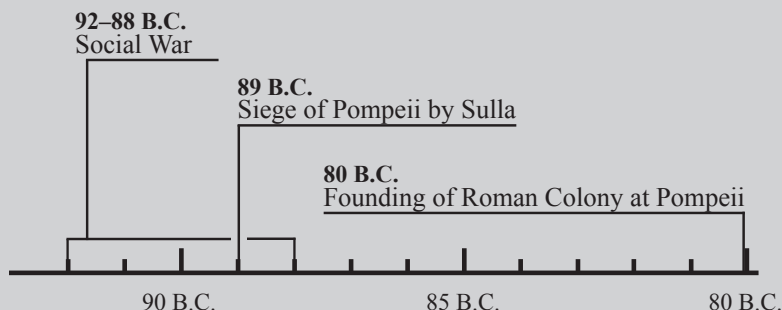
The Romans imposed their cultural identity through architecture as well. The Greek-style Large Theater was renovated in several ways, but the most Roman of the changes created an elite seating area that put the important spectators on display. Also, a stage building was added to the performance area, allowing more elaborate sets and special effects. The Odeon—a smaller, roofed, Roman-style theater—was also constructed right beside the Large Theater and was used for comedy and musical theater performances.

Unlike their modern counterparts, the *duoviri* paid for all of these public construction projects out of their own pockets. This is part of how we know who Pompeii's *duoviri* were in 80 B.C.; a dedicatory inscription on the outside of the Odeon names Gaius Quinctius Valgus and Marcus Porcius the builders of this theater.



The Odeon at Pompeii, used for comedy and musical performances.

Pompeii Becomes a Roman City



The greatest Roman entertainment space at Pompeii was the Amphitheater. This building and its large peristyle courtyard comprised the largest of the Roman public buildings in the city, and it is the oldest Roman amphitheater known to us. The Grand Peristyle contained a swimming pool that was the center of what we might think of as a food court, where people attending all-day performances could take a break, have some refreshments, and cool off with a swim. The seating area reflects Roman social practices, but the performance area is an old-fashioned, open space, not designed for elaborate stagings, and the staircases are external, not enclosed. Unlike its Greek predecessors, which would be cut into a convenient hillside, it is made entirely of concrete. The Romans are a people who do not hesitate to reshape the world as they see fit. ■

Important Terms

duoviri: Senior-level municipal magistracy, held by two men each year.

Social War: Brutal conflict between 92 and 88 B.C. that secured Roman domination of the Italian Peninsula.

Names to Know

Marcus Porcius and **Gaius Quinctius Valgus** (fl. 1st century B.C.): Early Pompeii *duoviri* who oversaw construction of the Amphitheater and the Odeon and conversion of Pompeii's public buildings for Roman needs.

Sulla (a.k.a. **Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix**; 138–79 B.C.): Roman dictator who besieged Pompeii in the Social War and founded the Roman colony there in 80 B.C.

Suggested Reading

Berry, "Birth and Growth of a Roman Town."

Cooley and Cooley, "Roman Colonization of Pompeii."

Richardson, *Pompeii: An Architectural History*.

Zanker, "The Roman Colonists' City."

Questions to Consider

1. Where across the city do we see the strongest projections of Roman identity?
2. In what ways does the Roman city exist only as a light layer of new culture on the earlier cultural identity of the city?

Villa of the Papyri and Life with Piso

Lecture 7

The Villa of the Papyri is without a doubt the nexus of a series of settings and events in which the Roman elite culture of *otium* is established, shaped, and transmitted.

The Villa of the Papyri is one of the largest, grandest, and best-preserved private dwellings ever found in the ancient Mediterranean world. We do not know when or for whom it was constructed, but in the 40s B.C., it was the home of **Lucius Calpurnius Piso**, the father-in-law of Julius Caesar. Here, we consider Piso's home as representative of Roman **villa** architecture and look at how it reinforces Roman cultural ideals.

Roman villa culture is a creation of the Roman system, and it defines their way of life. It originated sometime after the end of the Second Punic War, around 200 B.C., when Romans began building large-scale private residences outside of Rome. In fact, a villa is, by definition, extramural—that is, outside the walls of a city. The first seaside villa, or *villa maritima*, was built by **Scipio Africanus**, the general who defeated Hannibal in the Second Punic War. Such was his prestige that elite and middle-class Romans began emulating Scipio's villa in form and location, all in pursuit of the Roman concept of *otium*—constructive leisure.

The Villa of the Papyri is a *villa suburbana*—that is, a suburban villa—just outside Herculaneum. Like a Roman townhouse, and unlike Scipio's villa, this villa has an atrium, a huge one. The major wing of the house stretches 250 meters, or 836 feet, along the seafront. It was four stories high and included formal gardens and baths. In an era without climate control, the enormous, varied spaces allowed residents to use different areas of the house in different seasons and at different times of day.

The interior courtyard sheltered an elaborate garden containing bronze sculptures chosen not only for their beauty but for their historical, conversational, and instructional value, including busts of generals and philosophers and figures from Greek mythology. It is worth noting that this



Courtesy of Steven L. Tuck.

The Villa of the Papyri, a *villa suburbana* that lies on the Bay of Naples just outside Herculaneum.

villa, like the House of the Faun, is decorated primarily with imagery from Greek history, rather than mythology. A bust of Scipio Africanus was also found here.

The villa's name comes from the most remarkable find at the site—the library. The library at the Villa of the Papyri is the only library we have preserved from antiquity. The first excavators in the 1750s found what they thought were bits of charred wood and used them to light their torches. Quickly someone realized these were scrolls of papyrus—over 1,800 of them, mainly works of Epicurean philosophy by **Philodemus of Gadara**. Owing to their fragility, only a few hundred have been opened and read so far.

Life in the household revolved around *otium*, even at the dinner table, which would take place in the *triclinium*, or room with three couches. The *triclinium* decor encouraged conversation about mythology, philosophy, history, and nature. Conversations at Piso's would have influenced the thought of leading Romans, such as the poets Horace and Vergil and even Julius Caesar himself. The Villa of the Papyri was no doubt a nexus of the developing empire's culture. ■

Important Terms

otium: Latin term for constructive leisure.

villa: Roman private residence that lay outside city boundaries and was designed for the pursuit of *otium*.

Names to Know

Lucius Calpurnius Piso (fl. 1st century B.C.): Roman consul and father-in-law of Julius Caesar who owned the Villa of the Papyri.

Philodemus of Gadara (c. 110–c. 35 B.C.): Greek Epicurean philosopher-in-residence at the Villa of the Papyri.

Scipio Africanus (236–183 B.C.): Roman general and first Roman to build a *villa maritima*.

Suggested Reading

D'Arms, *Romans on the Bay of Naples*.

Mattusch, *The Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum*.

Sider, *The Library of the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum*.

Questions to Consider

1. In terms of decoration, setting, activities, and personnel, how does the Villa of the Papyri exemplify the Roman concept of *otium*?
2. What does the villa material reveal about Greek cultural inclusion within Roman elite domestic space?

Marriage and Mysteries—Rites of Dionysus

Lecture 8

That's the nature of a Roman wedding and a Roman marriage. It's not a romantic event. It is in fact a contractual obligation ... a legal ceremony, no different than, say, a court case.

In this lecture, we extend our exploration of villa life into the feminine world as we visit the Villa of the Mysteries, a *villa rustica*, or working farm villa, on the edge of Pompeii. While it resembles a Roman townhouse, the floor plan is reversed in that you enter the home through the peristyle garden. Unlike in townhomes, the rooms around the garden contain storage rooms for food, farming equipment, and food-processing equipment, particularly for the making of wine.

Wine grapes were one of the region's major crops, and thus the popularity of **Dionysus**, the wine god, in the region is no surprise. His image is found throughout Pompeii in sculptures, paintings, mosaics, furniture, and more. He is arguably second only to Venus in importance here.

Another unusual feature of this villa is a suite of rooms at the back designed specifically for initiation of a bride into the rites of Dionysus on the eve of her wedding. It is one of the few places in any Pompeian residence we can confidently say was women's space. In fact, the rooms have their own entrances, so that women could come and go without passing into the rest of the villa. If you are wondering, if this is women's space, why do



The atrium of the Villa of the Mysteries.

Courtesy of Steven L. Tuck.

we not have a men's space? The answer is that all other spaces in the public and private spheres in the Roman world are men's spaces.

As we have seen before, the decoration reinforces the use of the space. The antechamber is decorated with Dionysiac figures of satyrs and maenads, plus Dionysus himself, so there is no question to whom the ritual is directed. The wall paintings of the chamber proper comprise a visual record of the steps of the initiation, many of which may seem familiar from various modern initiation ceremonies: a text reading, a shared meal, a ritual cleansing, a special outfit, an ordeal, and a moment of epiphany. The steps are presented in order, first along the left-hand wall, then the right-hand wall, and finally on the back wall of the room. Notably, all of the adult human figures in the paintings are female. The only male figures are statues, mythological figures, or child servants. We know that this was a premarital ritual because the last image on the right-hand wall depicts the initiate having her hair dressed in a style specific to Roman brides.

The purpose of an epiphany is usually a deeper understanding of the self or a deeper understanding of the nature of a god. Here, as elsewhere, it is a transitional moment, in this case between childhood and womanhood. The ritual's purpose is to reassure her of her own readiness, her place in the universe, and the power of the god. Thus Dionysus appears in the center of the back wall, presiding over the ritual.

Weddings took place at the bride's house and included several familiar elements: the presence of family, a priest, attendants, an exchange of vows, and a signed contract. But it would also include the key element of any Roman religious ritual, a sacrifice, and the wedding would end not with a kiss but with a handshake between bride and groom, because the nature of Roman marriage was essentially an economic contract. After the ceremony, a meal is served, and the couple receives gifts.

The events inside the bride's home are followed by a *pompa*, or procession, of the bride, the groom, and the groom's family and friends through the city to the groom's house. They are accompanied by musicians and by attendants scattering nuts and flowers (both symbolic of fertility) to the crowds. On reaching the groom's house, the bride would anoint the doorway, and then

the groom would carry her inside. She is now the house's matron, with responsibility for the entire household. From here on, she will rarely leave the house; it is her sphere.

While our information about Roman marriage comes from various sources, the initiation chamber at the Villa of the Mysteries is the only location we have from the ancient world where we know these rites took place. It shows us a remarkable amount about women's lives, about the power of Dionysus, and the role of the villa. ■

Important Terms

Dionysus: Ancient Roman wine god, one of Pompeii's patron deities.

pompa: Ceremonial parade.

Suggested Reading

Bernstein, "Pompeian Women."

Fierz-David, *Women's Dionysian Initiation*.

Gazda, ed., *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii*.

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways does the initiation into the worship of Dionysus serve as a transitional ritual for the bride's wedding?
2. Does the worship of Dionysus intersect with the economic as well as the cultural basis of life at Pompeii?

Eumachia, Public Priestess

Lecture 9

A public funeral ... is an opportunity for a family to remind the gathered community of the contributions of the entire family.

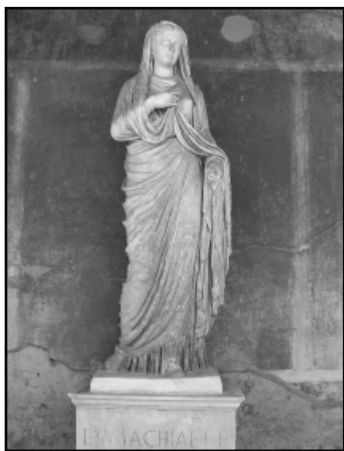
In this lecture, we attend the funeral of **Eumachia**, a rare female Roman public figure, in about A.D. 15. Her story demonstrates how the reign of Augustus affected the entire empire not only politically but socially as well. Augustus's wife, **Livia Drusilla**, was the first Roman woman to make a role for herself in the public sphere, and she inspired Eumachia and women like her. Eumachia's world and her prospects differed dramatically from those of the girl whose marriage we followed in 40 B.C.

What we know of Eumachia's life and accomplishments comes from her funeral oration, given by her son, Marcus Numistrius Fronto. But before her funeral came an extensive series of social rituals. A funeral is not just about the deceased; it is about the survivors as well, and in ancient Rome, it was an opportunity for survivors to reinforce their social position.

The first funeral ritual was the lying in state. Eumachia was laid out in the atrium of her husband's home on a *kline*, or dining couch. The family, extended family, and household slaves (including freed slaves) were in attendance, along with local political and religious officials. Members of the community would come for viewing and visitation over the course of three days.

Following the viewing was a funeral procession to the forum. This is when her son would deliver the eulogy from the *rostra*, or speaker's platform. Why her son and why in this space? It was his opportunity to establish a reputation for oratory, the basis for a public career. The witnesses to this spectacle included the entire Pompeii community. Events such as this were a form of public entertainment. In particular, political officials and would-be officials, along with religious leaders, would attend to reinforce their connection to a prominent family.

The contents of the eulogy followed a standard format that established the prominence and public contributions of the entire family, starting with the deceased's greatest achievement and working downward. In this case, it begins with Eumachia's rank as a *sacerdos publica*, a public priestess, in the cult of Venus, the patron deity of Pompeii. Her second achievement was a massive building that stood opposite the *rostra* along the edge of the forum, which was dedicated to the Concordia Augusta and Pietas—Augustan Harmony and Piety. Livia had dedicated a building to those same values at Rome about 20 years earlier. At 100 feet long, 40 feet wide, and two stories, Eumachia's Concordia is larger than the basilica and the largest enclosed space ever built in Pompeii. The facade is decorated with statues of Romulus and Aeneas, the founders of Rome, emulating statues found in Rome's Forum Augustum. The marble doorframe is decorated with acanthus motifs copied from Rome's Ara Pacis Augustae, the Altar of Augustan Peace, and we have reason to believe the same artist carved both the altar and this frame. The building's dedicatory inscription reads "Eumachia, the daughter of Lucius, the public priestess, in her own name and in the name of her son built this building with her own money and dedicated it."



Courtesy of Steven L. Tuck.

The statue of Eumachia at the Concordia.

At the back of the building is a niche containing a statue of Eumachia herself. Her pose and her attributes, with her veil over her head, show her piety and her religious duty. But what is more interesting is that Eumachia's stance and hand gestures are taken from public images of Livia from the same period. The dedicatory inscription tells us that the statue was erected by the city's fullers, or wool workers. At the very least, this tells us that some of Pompeii's wealthiest and most powerful merchants approved of this new role for women in Roman public life.

Next the eulogy turned to the public lives of Eumachia's family. Her father, Lucius Eumachius, was a brick maker and is mentioned only briefly, as commercial success was less valued than public service. Her husband, a former *duoviri* and a *ministri Augusti* (a priest of the cult of the emperor), got much more time. The rest of her ancestors and then her descendants were discussed, the implication being that she is just one example of greatness among many in her family.

After the eulogy, the funeral procession made its way out of the gate to Eumachia's tomb, placed prominently near the city walls and the road. It is remarkable for being her own tomb, not her father's or husband's. This, too, is evidence of her power and success, which only became possible for a Roman woman with the reign of Augustus. ■

Important Terms

ministri Augusti: Priest of the cult of the emperors.

rostra: Speaker's platform in a Roman forum.

sacerdos publica: Priestess of a public cult.

Names to Know

Eumachia (fl. late 1st century B.C.–early 1st century A.D.): Public priestess of Venus and benefactor to the city of Pompeii.

Livia Drusilla (58 B.C.–A.D. 29): Wife of Augustus and women's role model during the early Roman Empire.

Suggested Reading

Berry, "The People of Pompeii and Life in the Public Eye."

Cooley and Cooley, "Eumachia's Tomb."

Zanker, "Townscape and Ideology in the Age of Augustus."

Questions to Consider

1. What aspects of Eumachia's career demonstrate the reception of Augustus's new buildings and ideology at Rome?
2. How does Eumachia serve as a case study for the life of a woman in a Roman town?

A Female Slave in Pompeii

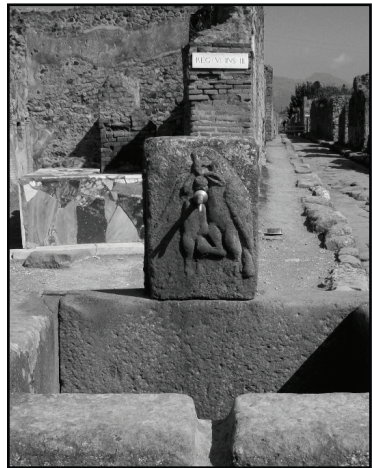
Lecture 10

It has been said that Pompeii allows us to explore elements of the Roman world we simply can't see anywhere else. ... It's especially true for the lives of women and slaves.

What does Pompeii reveal about a day in the life of a female Roman slave? Even within the same spaces, the experience of the city was very different for a slave than for her master. In this lecture, we follow a *verna*, or house-born female slave, named Chryseis through a typical day in Pompeii.

Slaves like Chryseis would sleep in a hallway near the kitchen as there were only a handful of bedrooms in a typical household of 50 people. She rose at dawn or earlier each day to obtain fresh produce from the market and water from the public fountains. She would not pass through the public entrance to the house but out a back door. Note that slaves had great freedom of movement within the city; they made up almost the entire labor force and had to be able to move and work independently to keep Roman life in motion.

In the morning, the city belongs to the lower classes—merchants and slaves, male and female alike—who would all head to the **macellum**, or central market, for produce, fish, and meat. The market's walls were decorated with paintings of female virtue (which indicates that the shoppers were generally female) and of food. The wall decorations were arranged in the same tripartite manner as we have seen elsewhere in Pompeii. Across the forum, public scales monitored by



One of Pompeii's public drinking-water fountains.

Courtesy of Steven L. Tuck

a city-owned slave were available for weighing and measuring goods, to ensure the honesty of the merchants.

Houses at Pompeii had no ovens, so bread would also be obtained at the market from a shop that was both mill and bakery. Baking began in the middle of the night to be ready for the morning demand. There were 31 of these in Pompeii's macellum that we know of, all clustered in the same area. The grindstones might be powered by donkeys or slaves, depending on their size.

The fountain where Chryseis obtained the house's water was one of at least 36 scattered more or less evenly around the city. These fountains were gravity fed from the city's aqueduct.

Back at home, Chryseis might help with food preparation and next would wait on the matron of the house as the matron made her daily trip to the public

Carrying water in the Roman world is relegated to women, as it was in the Greek world.

baths. Slaves carried their owners' many bathing implements and their change of clothes; the owner's hands would be full just managing the 15 yards of her woolen toga. This slave retinue also displayed the owner's wealth and status.

The elites spent many hours at the baths, socializing, networking, exercising, and dining as well as bathing. Food and wine consumed at the baths came from one of over 100 snack bars scattered throughout the city, shops with features we would instantly recognize from modern fast-food and convenience stores. The elites would exercise in the **palaestra**, or courtyard, and its swimming pool. These two spaces, along with the latrine, were the only non-gender-restricted areas in the baths. Interior spaces were gender restricted for both owners and slaves, with the furnace room often separating the men's suite from the women's. As might be expected in the Roman world, the men had larger, better-decorated, better-stocked accommodations.

Slaves' movements within the baths were restricted. When not occupied with her mistress's bidding, Chryseis would sit in the changing room, guarding

her mistress's possessions, or in a larger waiting room with access to the street but no entertainment or occupation.

Chryseis's daily routine reminds us that the labor that built the Roman system remained largely unchanged throughout the entire Roman period at Pompeii, despite the other great changes in Roman social and political life of the period. ■

Important Terms

macellum: Marketplace, especially for meat and fish.

palaestra: Exercise yard at an urban bath complex.

verna: Woman born into slavery in a Roman household.

Suggested Reading

Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire*.

Gardner and Wiedemann, *The Roman Household*.

George, "The Lives of Slaves."

Questions to Consider

1. How does her status as a slave limit Chryseis's experience of the city?
2. What alternatives to household slavery were available to Chryseis?

Governing in the 1st Century A.D.

Lecture 11

The *duoviri* and the aediles and their work changed the face of Europe and all the lands around the Mediterranean basin.

To examine political life at Pompeii and the local effects of imperial rule at Rome, we follow Pompeii's *duoviri*, or joint chief magistrates, and the *aediles*, or managers of public works, as they go about their daily work in A.D. 40.

Thanks to surviving *dipinti*, the campaign posters painted on Pompeii's walls, we know that Marcus Holconius Macer and Marcus Lucretius Epidius Flaccus were the *duoviri* and Lucius Albucius Celsus and Decimus Lucretius Valens were aediles that year. On this day, the four men meet in the morning at the 100-year-old Forum Baths, examine their condition, and discuss their renovation and how to pay for it. Roman public officials were hesitant to raise taxes for much the same reason that modern ones are, so many public works were dependent on wealthy donors and patrons, who gave their money in exchange for an inscription on the building or equipment they paid for. Finding patrons was a large part of these officials' jobs.

After this meeting, the *duoviri* and aediles would split up to pursue their separate duties. The *duoviri* went to the curia, or local senate house, to meet with the city council and/or the basilica to address the court schedule. They might also visit the *tabularium*, or public records hall, to evaluate the civic voter rolls. Periodically,



The curia, or local senate house, at Pompeii.

Courtesy of Steven L. Tuck.

they would inspect citizenship documents—which might include birth certificates, imperial grants, and military discharge papers—in the forum. All of these locations are on the south side of the forum, the major administrative center.

The aediles, on the other hand, range all over the city in a day. On this particular day, they might first go to the forum to supervise the public slaves who were replacing the old, volcanic-stone colonnade with a marble one.

Things are never perfect when you're in charge of the roads, the water, the marketplace, improvements. ... The aediles really have a thankless task.

They would intercede in commercial disputes and supervise the macellum. They were also in charge of the roads and water systems, so they would address any daily problems that arose with either. As one can imagine, serving as an aedile could be a complicated, thankless task.

The water system was one of the defining features of a Roman city and was also under the aediles' purview. Pompeii's gravity-fed aqueduct directed water into a fortified brick *castellum* near the Vesuvian Gate, from where it would be divided and redirected through lead pipes to all the public fountains around the city.

The public slaves performing all of this labor were criminals who had been convicted of noncapital crimes and sentenced to community service. Unlike modern community service sentences, their terms were not counted in hours but in years or decades of full-time labor. It is worth noting that there was little hope of early release from a sentence, and thus the slaves' motivation to do their jobs well was low.

But in A.D. 40, the aediles' major task was a massive reorganization of the forum's monument sets. Augustus had created Rome's first dynasty, and his entire extended family by blood or marriage had to be celebrated. Under the emperors Tiberius and Caligula, who was emperor in A.D. 40, local communities created monuments on a regular basis to direct attention, worship, and civic regard to the family of the emperors.

Statues of benefactors from the past 120 years of Pompeii's history, each granted a place in the forum by decree of the city council, had to be moved from the southern, civic side of the forum to the north side to make way for these new monuments. Small platforms for individual figures were wiped out to make way for much larger platforms, depicting entire family groups, generals on horseback, and so forth. The same local officials who were courting local elites for donations were displacing old donors' statues to curry favor with the imperial government. ■

Important Terms

aediles: Local Roman magistrates in charge of infrastructure.

dipinti: Public announcements painted (versus engraved) on walls.

tabularium: Civic records hall.

Suggested Reading

Berry, "Life in the Public Eye."

Franklin, *Pompeii: The Electoral Programmata*.

Mouritsen, *Elections, Magistrates, and Municipal Élite*.

Questions to Consider

1. Who are the local officials in a Roman colony, and what are their daily obligations?
2. How does Pompeii demonstrate the changes in the Roman world under the imperial government at Rome?

Games and Competition for Offices

Lecture 12

We know that games took months or years to plan because we have correspondence that survives from politicians who were trying to arrange games. ... It is a very complex and incredibly expensive procedure.

In Pompeii, men competing for public office hosted gladiatorial games to boost their name recognition and reputations. In this lecture, we see how Decimus Lucretius Satrius Valens and his son attempt to advance their public careers in this manner sometime between A.D. 41 and 54. Lucretius is, we believe, the same man who was aedile in A.D. 40, but he has added another name, Satrius, possibly to show his connections to his mother's family, although it is possible that this is a different man.

Planning might begin months or even years before the games. Lucretius would meet with various contractors at his home, a site known as the House of the Marine Venus. It is a standard mid-1st-century house, with no *tablinum*; instead, it has an enlarged **peristyle** garden used as a reception space. Here, the garden takes up over 40 percent of the house. A trompe l'oeil painting of Venus at the back of the garden gives the house its modern name. Lucretius may have chosen this decoration as a political maneuver, connecting himself to the city's patron deity and her cult.

One of the first things Lucretius had to arrange was the import of wild animals for the hunts, and it was typical to order twice as many as were needed, because so many would die in transport and storage. The **Amphitheater** at Pompeii could not accommodate the big cats safely, having no fence separating the arena floor from the audience, so bears, boars, and bulls were used. Professional hunters would be hired along with the animals.

Lucretius would also arrange for advertising well in advance of the games. In this case, he hired Aemilius Celer to paint announcements on walls all over the city, and even outside the city walls on tombs, and some of those announcements have survived. The text reads: "Twenty pairs of gladiators of

Decimus Lucretius Satrius Valens, perpetual flamen of Nero Caesar, son of Augustus, and 10 pairs of gladiators of his son, Decimus Lucretius Valens, will fight at Pompeii from 8–12 April.” Note the phrasing; once a patron has paid for gladiators, they are essentially his property—“gladiators of Lucretius.” These games were not just local events. Announcements found outside Pompeii’s walls advertise games in other communities around the Bay of Naples, and we have reason to think Pompeian games would have been advertised at those other cities as well.

Next, Lucretius would meet with the head of the gladiatorial school to arrange for the promised fighters. Five days is a long set of games, and 30 is a large number of gladiators, so the costs would have been enormous. In addition

to renting out the gladiators, Lucretius would have to pay additional fees if a gladiator was critically wounded or killed. He would have to pay to release a gladiator from slavery if the crowd demanded it. He would have to pay to have second-string fighters on standby.

Finally, Lucretius would have to negotiate with the city aediles for the Amphitheater and grounds to be ready and the awnings in place on the advertised dates.

On the evening before the games, Lucretius hosted a meal in the gladiatorial school, located in the former peristyle of the Large Theater. The guests included the gladiators, the patrons, and the visiting politicians from other communities, essentially a networking and public relations event. He would also visit the bakers that night to ensure there was bread to be distributed to the crowds at the games. These distributions of bread and other token gifts were called *sparsiones*, meaning “sprinklings.” His last stop before heading



The Amphitheater at Pompeii hosted the city’s gladiatorial games.

Courtesy of Steven L. Tuck

home was an appearance at the Amphitheater's palaestra, where the animals for the hunt were kept on display.

The games began with a *pompa* of Lucretius, his son, their supporters, and the gladiators and hunters. Inside the Amphitheater, Lucretius and the elite members of the community would take their places in the lowest tier of seating, to put themselves on display along with the fighters. Throughout the games, Lucretius and his son would draw attention to themselves through awarding trophies to winners, through *sparsiones*, and so forth. All of the trouble and expense of planning these games was for this very purpose; by associating himself with a well-presented set of games, a Roman man could make his or his son's political career. ■

Important Terms

amphitheater: Oval or round theater used for gladiatorial games.

peristyle: Garden surrounded by columns at the heart of a Roman townhome.

sparsiones: Gifts of food, goods, or money distributed to the crowds by the patron of a gladiatorial game.

Suggested Reading

Franklin, *Pompeii Difficile Est*.

Mouritsen, *Elections, Magistrates, and Municipal Elite*.

Questions to Consider

1. To what extent is spectacular entertainment at Pompeii integrated with the political system?
2. How do the political elite use these games to link themselves to the electorate and to their peers through their varying experience at the entertainment?

Riot in the Amphitheater—A.D. 59

Lecture 13

The riot ... exposes the system that created the games and the underlying violence that politicians used to advance their careers. It also demonstrates just how dangerous this system was when things fall apart.

While a successful set of games could make a Roman man's career, a disastrous set could break it. The Amphitheater riot in A.D. 59 was just such a case. Our account of the riot comes from Tacitus's *Annals*. The Romans could be quite ambivalent about the value of gladiatorial combat. While the people appreciated it as entertainment, Julius Caesar's use of gladiators as bodyguards and the Spartacan revolt in 73 B.C. had demonstrated the very real power and danger these forces presented. In addition, the moral effect of the violence of gladiatorial combat on the Roman people was seriously debated by people such as the Stoic philosopher **Seneca the Younger**.

On this occasion in A.D. 59, Gnaeus Pompeius Grosphus and his son were the *duoviri* in charge of the games, but they were relying on a man called **Livineius Regulus**, a former senator, to run the games for them. (This, as far as we know, was a unique situation in the history of games at Pompeii.)

The Amphitheater seated 20,000 people, about the entire population of Pompeii. It is thought that typically about half of the attendees were from neighboring cities. On this occasion, Tacitus tells us, many Nucerians were at the games. There was a centuries-long history of animosity and warfare between Nuceria and Pompeii, so what started as normal fan chanting and taunting turned into stone-throwing and knife or sword fighting. We might reasonably conclude that Roman communities, or at least the Pompeians, saw an attack on their gladiatorial school as an attack on their community.

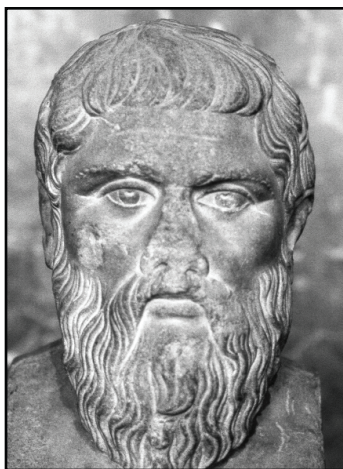
One unique wall painting from a house in Pompeii offers further evidence of this riot. It shows an amphitheater that is an architectural match for the one at Pompeii, with background details that match the city as it was in this period.

The Amphitheater's awnings are up and the plaza is full of souvenir and snack stalls, so we know gladiatorial games are going on. Even an announcement of Lucretius's earlier games is visible on a wall. The human figures in the painting are all in combat, both in the Amphitheater and outside in the plaza and gardens. The elite seating sections are cleared out, while the lower-class sections are full of rioters.

Turning again to Tacitus, we discover that the riot was so serious that the Roman senate was called on by the Nucerians and the emperor to investigate it. In the end, Livineius and "the others who had excited the disturbance" were exiled.

Nias Pompeius Grosphus and his son were removed from the office of *duoviri* and were replaced by a prefect from Rome; they and their family are finished in local politics. Finally, the city was forbidden to host gladiatorial games for the next 10 years, and Pompeii's gladiatorial fan club was declared a political association and was banned.

The riot of A.D. 59, the only known case of violence at gladiatorial games, demonstrates just how potent the mixture of competition, violence, and politics could become in the Roman world. ■



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Plato's questioning of the value of gladiatorial combat later influenced the Stoics.

Important Term

Stoic: School of philosophy that considers the pursuit of wisdom and virtue the highest human aim.

Name to Know

Livineius Regulus (fl. 1st century A.D.): Former Roman senator who mounted the disastrous gladiatorial games of A.D. 59.

Seneca the Younger (4 B.C.–A.D. 65): Stoic philosopher who questioned the place of gladiatorial games in Roman life.

Suggested Reading

Beard, “Fun and Games.”

Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*.

Questions to Consider

1. How did the Roman system create the tensions and conditions that allowed the riot to take place?
2. What does the intervention of the government at Rome and its punishment of Pompeii reveal about the linkages between the capital and Pompeii?

The House of the Tragic Poet

Lecture 14

That elite idea of always being at home and always being accessible ... requires us to consider the wide range of audiences for the decor, particularly in the atrium. If anyone in town was allowed to enter the foyer and the atrium of the house, it must have been decorated with that in mind.

The House of the Tragic Poet, the setting for Edward Bulwer-Lytton's famous book *The Last Days of Pompeii*, is one of the best-studied sites in Pompeii. It also bears a noteworthy resemblance to the typical middle-class house described in **Petronius's** comic novel, the *Satyricon*. Here we look at the house's outstanding mosaics and wall paintings and consider who would actually view them during the course of a typical day.

The House of the Tragic Poet is a small, two-story house, lavishly decorated to project Roman values and markers of class. Behind the unremarkable facade, we find a Samnite-period house updated with decorations from the reign of Nero. On the floor of the front hall is a famous mosaic of a chained dog bearing the warning "CAVE CANUM"—beware of dog. Petronius describes these mosaics as the height of poor taste and worse logic: Why leave your door open to all comers but threaten them with a dog? We do not know whether the owners meant this warning seriously or as a joke.

The atrium has a guardroom, where a slave would be stationed day and night. This was necessary because we know from Petronius, Vitruvius, and Livy that houses were open to all comers during the daytime. Clients, business associates, and people seeking favors would wait in the atrium for an audience with their patron. In this sense, the atrium was a public space and was decorated with public viewing in mind.

The atrium in the House of the Tragic Poet contained panel paintings of Greek myths in the middle panel of the tripartite wall. The overall theme is love. The east wall shows the marriage of Zeus and Hera, the Judgment of Paris, and Achilles losing Briseis. These images are also associated with

Homer's *Illiad* and the Trojan War. The west wall shows Amphitrite by Poseidon and the aftermath of Achilles' loss of Briseis to Agamemnon. The bottom section of the wall is blank, as is typical. The topmost zone is painted with piles of shields; this form of decoration, which would have been on the main body of the wall in an old-fashioned house as a reference to past family glories, is here relegated to the upper zone.

The *tablinum* was the traditional reception room of a Roman home, where the owner received his guests while standing one step up from everyone who approached him, as if on a stage. This particular *tablinum* has an unusual emblema, or inset panel, in the floor mosaic that shows a group of actors preparing for a performance, but they appear to be not in a theater but in an old-fashioned Roman house. We do not know the significance of this image to the house's owner, but we can speculate that Petronius would have found it inappropriate.

In the private areas of the house, the decor is more varied. There is a small garden where the family would have spent most of its private time. It contained statuettes, a large shrine, and a trompe l'oeil painting of a larger



Courtesy of Steven L. Tuck.

The peristyle garden of the House of the Tragic Poet.

garden that seems to extend the space. These are all imitations of a patrician peristyle garden.

The ***triclinium***, or dining room, off the garden contains two wall paintings in situ; one is of Theseus and Ariadne, and the other is of Venus and Adonis. Once again, we see the theme of love, but this time it is doomed love. The room's subsidiary decorations are of gladiatorial combat.

The ambulatory around the garden is dominated by a single painting of the sacrifice of Iphigenia—not a love story, but still a story from the Trojan War as presented in Euripides' play *Iphigenia*. So both here and in the atrium, we have references not simply to mythology but to specific works of literature.

The House of the Tragic Poet shows us the personal display and eclecticism that characterized the Roman middle classes, individuals who would rise to dominate Pompeii in its last days. ■

Important Term

triclinium: Roman dining room of three dining couches for nine diners to recline and dine in a luxurious space.

Name to Know

Gaius Petronius Arbiter (d. A.D. 66): Author of the *Satyricon* and Emperor Nero's arbiter of taste.

Suggested Reading

Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy*.

Mazzoleni, *Domus*.

Richardson, *Pompeii: An Architectural History*.

Wood, *The House of the Tragic Poet*.

Questions to Consider

1. What are the major themes of the domestic decoration in the house? Which themes are Greek and which are Roman?
2. Do we see differences between the spaces and audiences of the house in their decoration and projected identity for the owners?

Pompeii's Wool Industry

Lecture 15

We also see here a model for the life of a freed slave in an industrial occupation in the Roman world and the opportunity for social and economic advancement that his installation represents.

Wool and wine were the two major agricultural products of the Bay of Naples region in antiquity. We are fortunate to have at Pompeii an excellently preserved *fullonica*, a shop for processing and cleaning wool, that belonged to a freed slave named **Stephanus**. In this lecture, we will explore the world of the *fullones*, or wool workers, the industrial processes of their trade, and the opportunities that these trades offered ex-slaves like Stephanus for social advancement in the Roman world.

The *fullones* were a prominent professional guild in the Roman world, and their work was tightly controlled by law. At Pompeii they were particularly wealthy and organized. About 80 percent of clothing in the Roman world was made of wool, so cleaning it was a large industry. We know about all the work performed in a *fullonica* because each step is illustrated in wonderful thematic paintings around the walls of Stephanus's shop.

Stephanus's *fullonica* is on Pompeii's main street, demonstrating the physical integration of industry and workshops into the urban fabric of the city; there were no zoning laws separating residential and industrial districts, despite the noise and the smells these industries produced. The building is a converted atrium house fitted with extensive plumbing, for which Stephanus would have paid the city a fee. Originally, the building had two stories, but the upper floor was destroyed in the eruption of Vesuvius, so we must speculate as to its form and use. We do know that these shops used urine—or, more specifically, the ammonia found in urine—as a major processing chemical, and they collected it by putting amphorae on the street outside the shop and paying male passersby a small fee to urinate in them. Full amphorae would be brought to the rear of the facility, where the water and the harsh chemicals were employed.



Courtesy of Steven L. Tuck

The **fullonica** of Stephanus, a well-preserved wool-processing site from Pompeii's thriving cloth industry.

At the far back of the lot are three inset tanks, each holding six to eight gallons, separated by small spur walls. Here wool was soaked in the urine and treaded on by slaves to remove stains, or raw wool would be treaded here to remove lanolin and other debris. On the opposite wall are three tiered tanks. Constantly flowing water from the city's aqueduct flowed into the top tank and through downspouts into the other two. The bottom tank would contain **fuller's earth**, a type of clay used like soap would be today. The fabric would go into the bottom tank first, where slaves would agitate it with sticks. Then it would go into the middle tank for a first rinse and the top tank, with the cleanest water, for a final rinse.

After the cleaning process, clothing was line dried, stretched, combed to remove pills, and sometimes bleached with sulfur smoke. We believe these processes took place on the roof at Stephanus's shop. Finally, clothes were folded and pressed mechanically in a large screw press. We have an example of one of these presses excavated from Herculaneum.

We don't know much about Stephanus himself, but his Greek name suggests that he was probably made a slave rather than born a slave. We can imagine that he learned his trade as a slave in a shop like this one and worked his way to the top, saving enough money along the way to buy his freedom. In the shop's paintings, he is shown in the front of the shop, which has been redesigned to resemble a *tablinum*, an elite man's reception room. The image is a clear record of the social mobility available to slaves and how they came to dominate local society in Pompeii's last years. ■

Important Terms

fuller's earth: Grease-cutting clay used as soap.

fullones: Wool workers, who formed a wealthy, powerful guild in ancient Pompeii.

fullonica: Establishment where clothes were cleaned and wool was dyed and finished.

Name to Know

Stephanus (fl. 1st century A.D.): Freed slave and owner of a large *fullonica* in Pompeii.

Suggested Reading

Bradley, "It All Comes out in the Wash."

Flohr, "Fullones and Roman Society."

George, "The Lives of Slaves."

Moeller, *The Wool Trade in Ancient Pompeii*.

Wilson, "The Archaeology of the Roman *Fullonica*."

Questions to Consider

1. How does the *fullonica* present us with a case study in Roman small industry and its place in the economy and in the urban structure?
2. In what ways does the *fullonica* demonstrate the potential as well as limitations of Roman social mobility?

Pompeii's Wine and Vineyards

Lecture 16

If it weren't for these [vineyards] and the careful excavation of them, we would never understand the economic base of life of Pompeii and the Bay of Naples as well as we do right now.

The best-preserved farm from the entire ancient Roman world is the vineyard at the Villa Regina, found a few miles outside Pompeii at Boscoreale. This farm shows the major stages of growing, pressing, fermenting, and storing wine in antiquity with a level of detail that the surviving literary references cannot touch. We have Wilhelmina Jashemski the landscape archaeologist to thank for the excellent state of this site. Her plaster casts of roots allowed botanists to identify the plants that were growing at the site in A.D. 79 and to restore them.

The villa consists of a courtyard surrounded on three sides by buildings and on the fourth side by a wall. The only large window is in the upper half of a two-story room in the central building. Two wide doors—wide enough for farm wagons—give access to the courtyard, but there are no windows or other openings at ground level. The space was likely barred at night. Vines were planted outside the complex, all the way up to the buildings on all sides, with fruit trees planted between the rows, as described by both Cato the Elder in the 2nd century B.C. and Columella in the 1st century A.D.

Unlike the townhouses we have seen so far, the largest spaces in this working farm were devoted to agricultural production rather than social interaction, family life, or *otium*. Another difference is the Villa Regina's interior decoration, or lack thereof. The only decorated space on the entire farm is a shrine to Dionysus, the god of wine.

Excavations in the central building revealed a large tree trunk set into the floor; this was the yoke of the farm's wine press, the first press ever found that matched Cato's descriptions. Juice from the pressed grapes ran onto the concrete floor, which was surrounded by a lip and was slightly sloped. The slope let the juice flow into the courtyard, where it was collected and poured

into 18 **dolia**, or terra-cotta fermentation vessels, buried there up to their rims. The burial kept the jars at a consistent, cool temperature. Old wine was added as a starter, and then the jars were sealed. The wine would be checked periodically, and sometimes honey, herbs, or chalk was added to adjust the flavor, until the wine was deemed ready for the market and transferred to smaller amphorae to be sold. From the size and number of the dolia, we can estimate that over 5,000 gallons of wine could be made at the Villa Regina at one time.

Many of the Villa Regina's features are similar to those at the Villa of the Mysteries, where we earlier witnessed a young woman's initiation into the cult of Dionysus. The Villa of the Mysteries also offers evidence of a large vineyard workforce living onsite, including an enormous kitchen. Farm tools and food-storage equipment were recovered there as well, along with a similar but even better preserved winemaking area.

Within the city of Pompeii, the **Forum Boarium**, which lies next to the Amphitheater, was once a vineyard hosting over 24,000 individual vines, scattered fruit trees, and two open-air dining spaces. The area now called the Garden of the Fugitives on the south side of the city was a small vineyard with similar features. Since 1996, botanists have been planting experimental farms in these spaces, attempting to restore the ancient vine varieties once planted here. ■

Important Terms

dolia: Terra-cotta vessels used for wine fermentation.

Forum Boarium: Large former vineyard within the city of Pompeii, near the Amphitheater.

Suggested Reading

Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii*.

Laurence, "Production and Consumption."

Ling, "Economic Life."

Questions to Consider

1. What aspects of wine production were found inside the walls of Pompeii itself?
2. What does the material in and around Pompeii contribute to our understanding of viniculture in the Roman world?

Earthquake—A.D. 62

Lecture 17

“This tremor was on 5 February, in the consulship of Regulus and Verginius, and it inflicted great devastation on Campania. ... Sheep died and statues split. Some people have lost their minds and wander about in their madness.”

— Seneca the Younger

On February 5, 62, a 7.5-magnitude earthquake struck the Bay of Naples, with its epicenter at Pompeii. This lecture looks at the destruction as both a geological and a socioeconomic phenomenon that foreshadowed the terrible destruction of A.D. 79.

For perspective, the quake of A.D. 62 was about the same magnitude as the famous 1906 San Francisco earthquake that killed 3,000 people and destroyed so many buildings that three-quarters of the city’s population was left homeless. It was also similar to a 1908 earthquake in Messina on the island of Sicily; in fact, the Messina earthquake occurred on the very same fault line as Pompeii’s, and like the latter, it was followed by a devastating tsunami.

In all of these cases, urban density and quality of construction had almost as profound an impact on the level of destruction as the quake’s magnitude. Pompeii had a population of 20,000 people in a five-square-mile area, and ancient architects had no modern concept of earthquake-proof architecture, so the consequences were enormous. Heavy roofs made of wood beams and overlapping terra-cotta tiles collapsed. Large ashlar-block foundations with minimal mortar had little flexibility and thus cracked and shattered, while older, Samnite rubble foundations fared a bit better. The entire water system was disrupted, and many homes were left uninhabitable. Archaeologists have confirmed that every major public building in the city suffered earthquake damage.

We have two firsthand accounts of the devastation. The first is a letter from the philosopher Seneca the Younger, who confirms that Pompeii suffered

the greatest damage in the quake by far, whereas Herculaneum suffered less damage and Naples barely any. Geologically, this localized devastation indicates that the focus of the quake was close to the surface. Seneca also tells us that the earthquake split Pompeii's statues; thus we know that rather than

Many of the elite families that served the community through public office seemed to have left, allowing the rise of a new group of leaders.

the rumbling type of earthquake, this was a sudden earth movement. In human terms, Seneca's comment that "people wander about in their madness" is perhaps the most significant and poignant. The quake was over in an instant, but its effects lasted for many years.

The second firsthand account is a relief carving found in a house at Pompeii. It shows the *capitolium* almost at a diagonal; a patera, or sacrificial vessel, hovering in midair and spilling its contents; and a man and a sacrificial cow or bull, also in midair. This is clearly capturing the moment of the quake, and it backs up Seneca's hints of a sudden earth movement—type quake.

The earthquake had economic effects as far away as the city of Rome. In this period, Rome imported almost all the grain consumed in the city by ship from Alexandria and Carthage. These ships arrived once a year, docking at **Ostia** on the Bay of Naples. The historian Tacitus tells us that on that same day, 200 of the year's 300 grain ships were swamped in the harbor at Ostia by a tidal wave—what we would now call a tsunami.

When Pompeii was rebuilt, Emperor Nero's palaces at Rome became the new standard for architecture and interior design. Nero's second wife, Poppaea Sabina, was Pompeian, and her fellow citizens curried favor with the emperor by reinforcing that connection. White ground paintings replaced red ground paintings, isolated figures replaced full scenes, and filigree work and inset gems based on contemporary jewelry decorated borders and edges. The earthquake also redefined Pompeii's social order, as older, powerful families abandoned the city and new families—many with close connections to Nero—moved in to take advantage of the power vacuum. ■

Important Terms

capitolium: Temple to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva that dominated the forum of a Roman colony.

Ostia: Major ancient Roman seaport on the Bay of Naples.

Suggested Reading

De Carolis and Patricelli, *Vesuvius, A.D. 79*.

Sigurdsson, “The Environmental and Geomorphological Context of the Volcano.”

Questions to Consider

1. What were the larger—regional and peninsula-wide—effects of the earthquake?
2. How did the earthquake change the physical structure and population makeup of Pompeii?

Rebuilding after the Earthquake

Lecture 18

The pattern of rebuilding demonstrates the extent of the damage and the commitment to reconstruction and new construction made by the citizens of Pompeii, as well as imperial intervention.

We can deduce a lot about how Roman culture was changing in the 1st century A.D. by looking at the restoration of the public buildings after the earthquake at Pompeii. The rebuilding of the Temple of Isis contrasted with the neglect of the *capitolium* suggests that an interesting transformation of Roman religious practices was afoot during this period, and many aspects of the restoration illuminate the role of individual beneficence in creating and maintaining public spaces.

All of the major public buildings in Pompeii except the basilica, which was older and therefore constructed differently, suffered major damage in the earthquake. The severity of the damage required imperial intervention. Outside the Nucerian Gate, an inscribed stele announces that Emperor **Vespasian** sent an agent to resurvey the city and restore the *loca publica*, or public areas, that had been seized by private individuals. Buildings in the forum and on Pompeii's south side were reconstructed along their original lines but using a distinctive type of orange brick. Thus we can easily distinguish which of the old public buildings were still important to Pompeii's citizens—such as Eumachia's building, the Large Theater, and the Amphitheater—despite the new families taking power.

New construction in the forum included a shrine to the Emperor Vespasian, likely begun after his death in June 79 and therefore likely the last building constructed before the eruption of Vesuvius in August that same year. Across the Roman world at this time, cults and shrines of the emperor were on the rise, sometimes even supplanting the traditional deities. Unlike the old Greco-Roman gods, the deified emperors were believed to care about and intervene in the lives of mortals.

The same could be said of Isis, an old Egyptian deity who entered European culture via the Hellenistic, Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt. She was the patron deity of sailors, and so her shrines were found in harbors all around the

Mediterranean world. Not only is the spread of her cult evidence of Roman inclusiveness; it is also evidence of the growing popularity of deities who offer assistance to humankind—in the case of Isis, life after death.

This *euergetism* suggests a redirection of worship towards religions of personal salvation, a pattern which we find again everywhere else after the 2nd century.

Pompeii's Temple of Isis was restored, as an inscription over the door tells us, through the beneficence of Numerius Popidius Celsinus—or rather the beneficence of his family, as Celsinus was six years old at the time. For these

efforts, he was awarded a (no doubt honorary, at least for a few years) seat on the city council, and his political fortune was made for life. What is most interesting about this is not Celsinus's age but that the promotion of a foreign deity was seen as such a benefit to the community—further evidence of this noteworthy shift in Roman religious life. At the time of its original excavation, this temple held more votive material than any other sanctuary in the city. Other significant features of the Temple of Isis include decorative elements influenced by Nero's palaces, a baptismal tub that probably held water imported from the Nile, and a room dedicated to the ritual meal practiced in this and other salvation religions.

The care and popularity of the imperial and Isis temples stand in stark contrast to the treatment of the *capitolium* after the A.D. 62 quake—namely, it was never rebuilt, and the cult statue of Jupiter was left in the wreckage. We know that by the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D., religions of personal salvation (and Christianity in particular) had become the norm in Roman religious life. Thanks to the evidence found at Pompeii, we now know that this religious revolution was already in progress in the 1st century A.D. ■

Important Terms

evergetism: Public patronage and beneficence.

locus publicus: Roman legal term for public spaces.

Name to Know

Vespasian (A.D. 9–79; r. A.D. 69–79): Roman emperor and founder of the Flavian dynasty.

Suggested Reading

Berry, “The Last Years of Pompeii.”

Richardson, *Pompeii: An Architectural History*.

Zanker, “The City’s Final Years.”

Questions to Consider

1. What Roman cultural values contributed to the rapid rebuilding of the Sanctuary of Isis?
2. How did Pompeii after the earthquake anticipate trends that would be seen across the Roman world in the 2nd century?

Wall Paintings in the House of the Vettii

Lecture 19

Thanks to its preservation and careful excavation, we can explore this house and investigate how members of the Roman middle class lived ... a commercial middle-class identity that they presented to their guests through the organization of rooms, sculpture, and especially the unparalleled high-quality wall paintings.

The House of the Vettii is one of the best-decorated, best-preserved, and best-understood domestic spaces in Pompeii and, in fact, from the entire Roman world. It offers a wonderful opportunity to explore the domestic space and decor of the empire's new rich, which reflect the subjects and spaces but not the themes found in elite dwellings. Here promotion of illustrious ancestors is displaced with references to personal success, which hints at a social revolution taking place across the Roman world.

The house was originally a traditional atrium-style house but was renovated by **Aulus Vettius Conviva** and **Aulus Vettius Restitutus**, brothers who were wealthy freed slaves, members of a class of growing importance in the early empire. Unlike the old elite, these men were not interested in political office but had other measures of success, which we see reflected in the home.

The doorway and foyer of the home are narrower than what we have come to expect, with no room for clients and visitors to linger—implying that there were none. The area is dominated by a panel painting of the god **Priapus**, a rural deity associated with wealth and fertility but not with noble pretension like the images in other homes of generals and kings. Peering deeper into the house, a 1st-century visitor would have seen a statue of Priapus in the peristyle garden standing at the same angle, like a reflection of the painting.

Images of fertility and abundance continue in the atrium. Normally we would expect to find ancestor masks or military trophies here; instead we find enormous strongboxes, or **arcae**. This is something like having a safe in your front hallway.

The most notable alteration to this house was the removal of the *tablinum*; a homeowner who does not have clients and petitioners does not need one. Instead, the atrium leads into the peristyle garden, which was crammed with an eclectic array of statues and fountains, and around which all the house's other rooms are arranged. The private areas are found on the right-hand side as you enter the garden and are cut off from the atrium with a door.

What we're seeing here in this reinforcement of religious authority might reflect their feelings on the Roman system.

On the left-hand side of the peristyle we find the lavishly decorated winter dining room. It is decorated with Neronian white ground wall paintings of Greek mythological subjects. In the center panel, Dionysus watches Eros, the god of love, wrestling with the satyr Pan, whose name also means “all”—a visual pun in two languages: *amor omnia vincit*, or “love conquers all.”

Two other reception rooms off the garden were pinacothecas, or painting galleries, where the panel paintings create the illusion of being art removed from an ancient Greek house and hung here. The first room features Pasiphae, Ixion, and Ariadne on its three walls. The paintings in the second reception room show Hercules, Pentheus, and Dirce. All of these characters are shown either being punished for defying the authority of the gods or in a moment where an attempt to defy the gods' will is thwarted. Since one of the Vettius brothers was a priest in the cult of the emperor, these paintings about the danger of impiety seem to reflect a very personal ideology.

The last and largest reception room off the garden is decorated in red ground paintings that hint at the source of the Vettius brothers' wealth. The central panels are painted with unremarkable images of paired lovers, but the framing details show **putti** making perfume, jewelry, and garlands and cleaning wool—likely the industries in which the brothers were involved. Thus personal success seems to have come to overshadow family connections for the new elite of Pompeii. ■

Important Terms

arca: Strongbox.

Priapus: Roman god of fertility and prosperity.

putti: Images of little boys or cupids.

Names to Know

Aulus Vettius Conviva and **Aulus Vettius Restitutus** (fl. 1st century A.D.): Brothers and freed slaves who achieved commercial success in Pompeii.

Suggested Reading

Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.C.–A.D. 250*.

Mazzoleni, *Domus*.

Questions to Consider

1. How do the themes selected for the sets of wall paintings reflect the class, background, and commercial identity of the Vettius brothers?
2. What do the overtly erotic images tell us about Roman notions of public nudity and the image of the human form and love?

A Pompeian Country Club

Lecture 20

On the right-hand side here, you can see this line of benches and tables. ... Across the hallway there, however, is the *triclinium*. ... [This] gives us a sense of the various audiences for the Praedia. We have different groups who are using this space.

The Praedia of Julia Felix occupies an entire city block along the Via dell'Abbondanza in Pompeii. The 5,800-square-meter complex near the Forum Boarium vineyard includes baths, shops, apartments, and dining spaces, all decorated with paintings, statues, inscriptions, and furnishings that reflect the changing tastes of the middle-class Roman in the 1st century A.D.

Praedia is the Latin word for “properties,” in this case, a set of rental properties. The large painted “for rent” notice on the front wall of this *praedium* announces that it was available for a five-year lease starting August 13, 79—the same month in which Vesuvius erupted. The organization of space that we see throughout the property indicates a range of uses, and perhaps accessibility for a variety of customers. The rooms differ in size and orientation, with seven doors offering access to the Via dell'Abbondanza and four more along the side street. This abundance of access implies that the leaseholder may have sublet the property's various components. In the back was a large working farm area that supplied the facility with food.

One of the Via dell'Abbondanza doors leads to a small tavern, featuring a marble L-shaped countertop with built-in storage vessels and a seating area and, above it, living space for the proprietor or his staff. Unusually for this type of snack bar, there is also a *triclinium* for more formal dining, which indicates the patrician status of some of the clientele.

Past the tavern is a small, private bath complex that is accessible from both the main and side streets. It demonstrates a whole new level of luxury compared with the public baths we have seen so far. While it contains all the same rooms and facilities as a public bath—*natatio*, *palaestra*, *caldarium*,

tepidarium, *frigidarium*—it is lavishly decorated with blue ground paintings and marble baths.

The largest and grandest of the rental spaces is a large peristyle garden surrounded by formal dining and reception rooms, all painted with bright colors and detailed with imported marbles. (We know that some of the space was reconstructed after the A.D. 62 earthquake, thanks to the tell-tale orange brick found beneath the plaster.) The space is dominated by a canal that may also have served as a **piscina**, or fish farm, for the facility. Along one side of the garden is a series of small chambers whose design references Nero's imperial palace at Rome. The major reception space includes a marble-clad *triclinum* and a stair-step fountain referencing Nero's Domus Transitoria.

The columns of the colonnade that frames the garden are unique in the ancient world: fluted rectangular pilasters with decorated central panels and Corinthian capitals. The walls behind the colonnade feature terra-cotta tiling in a four-image repeat. Unfortunately, the formal plantings seen in the garden today are based on speculation, as the garden was excavated 200 years before Wilhelmina Jashemski's innovative work.

Several unique paintings were removed from this space in the 1750s and placed in the museum in Naples. The paintings from these rooms emphasize food in a style dismissively called *obsonia* by Pliny



The canal in the Praedia of Julia Felix was not only decorative but functional, serving as a source of fish for the kitchens.

Courtesy of Steven L. Tuck

the Elder. The term comes from the Greek tradition of paying pensions to victorious athletes, which included free meals for life. But *osbonia* also

Pliny is also a man who takes his *otium*—his leisure—very seriously.

referred to an aspect of *xenia*, or unquestioning hospitality. The specific foods portrayed here were the sort of high-status foods reserved for guests—especially game—along with a pitcher and towel that a guest might use to clean up after a journey. They may be an

indicator of middle-class concerns and middle-class taste, and Pliny may not have thought much of the subject, but these particular *osbonia* paintings are of outstandingly high quality.

Overall, the Praedia of Julia Felix, in their components and decoration, reflect the social changes of post-earthquake Pompeii, the shift in population, and the rise of the city's middle class. ■

Important Terms

obsonia: Still-life paintings.

piscina: Fish farm.

praedium (pl. *praedia*): Property.

Suggested Reading

Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans*.

Parslow, “Documents Illustrating the Excavation of the Praedia of Julia Felix in Pompeii.”

Questions to Consider

1. How was the property of Julia Felix designed and decorated to emphasize luxury and to emulate the elite spaces found in private villas?
2. How were the decorations selected to simultaneously invoke Greek guest-friendship and middle-class values?

Worshipping the Emperors at Herculaneum

Lecture 21

Augustus, as the first emperor, facilitated the inclusion of freed slaves—freedmen—into the local social system from which they had been barred previously under the Republic. ... Having this new social status gave these men social mobility. It also gave them an outlet and a structure for beneficence in their local communities.

Herculaneum was an ancient fishing village located on the coast of the Bay of Naples at the base of Mount Vesuvius that, consequently, was also destroyed and preserved by the eruption of A.D. 79. It was perhaps a quarter of the size of Pompeii, and only about 10 of its probable 20 blocks have been found—the other half is likely covered by a modern community—and only 6 of them are completely exposed. Although within the territory of the Roman Empire, Herculaneum was never a formal Roman colony either, so its remains make an interesting contrast to its larger, more metropolitan neighbor, Pompeii.

The village is laid out in orthogonal blocks, which reveal its Greek origins, and most of its streets are narrow pedestrian walkways. The only wide street in the community is referred to as its *decumanus*, although strictly speaking, that is incorrect; a *decumanus* is the major east-west boulevard of a Roman colony. The two structures studied in this lecture, a bath complex and the **Sacellum** of the **Augustales**, were both on the south side of this street.

Herculaneum's public baths were cramped, poorly lit, and old-fashioned but were richly decorated—an indication of the village's wealth. The *apodyterium*, or changing room, contained a bath as well; this dual-use room was a feature of baths dating to 150 B.C. The baths in all of the rooms were once lined with imported marble. (Unfortunately, much of the original stone was scavenged in the excavations of the 18th century.) The beautiful figural mosaic floors were probably the result of private benefactions, but unlike floors found in Pompeii, they are black-and-white Italic-style mosaics in a form that was created in the 2nd century B.C. We believe they were made in a mosaic workshop right in Herculaneum.

Among the men of leisure who visited these baths were the Augustales, priests of the cult of the emperor, a cult that Augustus established first in the Bay of Naples region. Augustus was the first Roman leader to give a social hand up to freed slaves, making them eligible for important public positions. This new opportunity meant great wealth; the wealthiest private people we know of from the imperial period besides emperors are freedmen. No wonder, then, that many of the Augustales came from their ranks.

The Augustales at Herculaneum were both a social and a religious organization. Their shrine, called a *sacellum*, was located on the *decumanus* near an intersection covered by a grand arch decorated with large marble and bronze sculptures. Herculaneum's was one of the first Augustales shrines, and what we see here would become the standard form. Just inside the door, the broad, open forecourt is divided by supporting columns into a central nave and two aisles. Beside each column, facing the nave, was a statue, now lost but for the bases and some inscriptions. The inscriptions tell us these were statues of the priests themselves, commemorating their beneficence.

The back wall of this forecourt is divided into three small rooms. The two side rooms were used for storage. The central room was the *sacellum* itself. Here, the floor is made of costly solid slabs of marble, and the *dados* were also marble-clad. The wall paintings are rare and expensive blue ground paintings; the blue pigment came from lapis lazuli imported from Afghanistan. The paintings on the side walls are white ground paintings detailed with faux columns and windows. They show scenes from the life and apotheosis of Hercules, the city's legendary founder and son of Zeus, creating a connection between Hercules's divinity and the emperors'. There is a place for only one statue here, which indicates that this room was redecorated following the death of Emperor Vespasian in June of 79—just two months before the city's destruction. ■

Important Terms

Augustalis (pl. **Augustales**): Priest of the cult of the emperor.

decumanus: The major east-west street in a Roman colony.

sacellum: Shrine.

Suggested Reading

Deiss, *Herculaneum*.

Fears, “Herculanensium Augustalium Aedes and the Theology of Ruler Cult.”

Questions to Consider

1. What was the role of the imperial cult and this sacellum in integrating freed slaves into the Roman power structure?
2. How does the decoration of the sacellum evoke Greek mythology and local pride to reinforce the role of the current emperor?

Visiting a Villa at Stabiae

Lecture 22

The setting and the architecture of this complex of villas make clear that the Romans viewed these buildings as more than just settings for *otium*, leisure. The construction conveys a sense of conquest of nature and taming it to the benefit of Roman culture.

We have considered villa culture as a consequence of *otium*—that is, constructive leisure—but the two cliff-side villas at Stabiae, south of Pompeii on the Bay of Naples, are also interesting evidence of the Roman attitude toward nature, namely their desire to conquer and control it. Our analysis of these villas is based in part on the work of the poet **Publius Papinius Statius**.

The attraction of Stabiae was the view, particularly the view across the bay toward Mount Vesuvius. (Remember that, as impressive as the view is today, the volcano was twice its present height in antiquity.) The harbor at Puteoli was also visible. Statius tells us that in his day the hills were covered in vineyards and a temple to Tyrrhene Minerva further along the cliff top. A mosaic of the Villa of Dominus Julius, which is in the Bardo Museum in Carthage, shows a structure closely matching Statius's descriptions, particularly its long colonnade, its domed bathhouse, and people stomping grapes for wine.

The unique feature of the Stabian villas versus the Roman dwellings we've seen so far is the lack of axiality. What we find instead are suites of seemingly unrelated rooms. What the architects did was design these buildings to flow along the highest ground possible, visually and literally dominating the wild landscape. The remains of the Villa San Marco and the Villa Arianna show just this sort of planning. In both cases, the suites are laid out at different orientations to take best advantage of the views and the climate. Meanwhile, the service areas of the house (the kitchens and storage and so forth) are placed furthest away from the cliff, so not a single spectacular view is wasted.

Although the Villa San Marco had a traditional atrium, it is dominated by a shrine for ancestor busts. (In this last phase of the villa's history, the shrine seems to have been empty. We think that after the earthquake, the original patrician owners sold it to members of the nouveau riche.) The villa's largest element is an enormous enclosed garden, which is protected from the heat of the sun. The garden's central element is a decorative canal. The wall paintings show the traditional focus on Greek myth, although some of the figures may be contemporary 1st-century portraits. The original statues, which had been removed to Naples, conform to Stasius's descriptions: "Masterpieces of Apelles, Myro, and Phidias; bronzes from the funeral fire of Corinth; busts of great captains and bards and wise men of old." These are not just sculptures of famous Greek philosophers and kings but copies of famous sculptures of those individuals.

The Villa Arianna has some unusual faux and real marble wall treatments of a type also mentioned by Statius. He mentions marbles from Greece, Phrygia, Egypt, Numidia, and Carystus, all the areas where the Romans are quarrying



Courtesy of Steven L. Tuck.

Mount Vesuvius as seen from Stabiae.

marble around the Mediterranean. The villa contains examples of all of these. Although much of the marble was scavenged by early excavators, the faux finishes and a few pieces of genuine stone remain. This same room features a simple black-and-white mosaic floor in the Italic style, implying that the walls are the more important component of the decoration. This lavish use of marble is not only a statement of the owners' wealth; it is also testament to Rome's dominion over the Mediterranean world—its peoples, its cultures, and its landscapes, down to the very stones. ■

Name to Know

Publius Papinius Statius (A.D. 45–95): Roman poet who wrote about villa design and culture.

Suggested Reading

Bergmann, “Painted Perspectives of a Villa Visit.”

D’Arms, *Romans on the Bay of Naples*.

Guzzo, *Otium Ludens*.

Pesce, *In Stabiano*.

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways do the placement, design, and selection of materials in the villa project a statement of Roman power over nature?
2. How does the experience of the villa visit differ from life in Pompeii, creating a disparate view of coastal Campania?

Pliny Narrates the Eruption of Vesuvius

Lecture 23

The eruption of Vesuvius ... is not only a remarkable event for preserving the material we've studied; it's also the only natural disaster in the Roman world with an eyewitness account.

A few years after the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79, the author and Roman administrator Pliny the Younger wrote his eyewitness account of the event in a letter to the historian Tacitus. His harrowing testimony perfectly matches the geological and archaeological evidence found at sites all around the Bay of Naples. In this lecture, we will draw on both physical and textual evidence to recreate the sequence of events that led to Pompeii's destruction.

The eruption of Vesuvius was actually a complex set of geological events emanating from this single, critical tectonic and seismic zone. In the early afternoon of August 24, volcanic gases that had been building up beneath the mountain for an unknown period of time ignited. This caused a massive explosion that pulverized the top half of the mountain and shot it into the air in the form of an eruptive column of hot ash and **pumice**. The prevailing winds pushed this debris south as it fell back to earth, so the areas south of Vesuvius, such as Pompeii and Stabiae and as far south as Paestum, were pummeled with half a mountain's worth of ash and stone over the next three days.

At this time, Pliny the Younger was living with his uncle, **Pliny the Elder**, at Misenum, on the north side of the bay. Pliny's letters chronicle both the disaster and his uncle's attempt, as head of the Roman navy, to mount rescue operations. He describes the cloud from the explosion as resembling an umbrella pine, or stone pine—what we might call a mushroom cloud. Shortly thereafter, word reached Pliny the Elder that several towns at the base of the mountain had no escape route but the sea, so he led all the major ships of the fleet toward Herculaneum. The ships were pelted with hot stones and were nearly run aground by “the sudden retreat of the sea”—the start of a tsunami that would trap on shore all those who had run to the coastline in hope of escape.

Pliny the Elder's ships were diverted to Stabiae, where the men took shelter at the home of his friend Pomponianus, which was also being pelted with stones and ash and was rocked with tremors. They debated whether it was safer to stay inside and risk the building's collapse or go outside and protect themselves from falling stones with pillows tied to their heads. They chose the latter and eventually made for their boats again. But by that time, the heavy, sulfurous volcanic gases had reached Stabiae. Because of their density, the gases collected in pockets close to the ground. When, exhausted, Pliny the Elder lay down for a moment to gather his strength, the gases suffocated and killed him.



Courtesy of Steven L. Tuck.

A geologist's reconstruction of a volcanic eruption like the one at Pompeii.

He was not the only person to die in this manner; many of the bodies found at Pompeii were of people who took shelter in low-lying areas or cellars, such as the 13 bodies found in the Garden of the Fugitives, one of the lowest spots in the city.

Meanwhile, on the west side of the mountain, near Herculaneum, five glowing-hot rivers of superheated steam, ash, mud, and rock were flowing down the slope at 450 miles per hour. Like the Pompeians, many of Herculaneum's citizens fled toward the sea but were trapped. The deadly **pyroclastic flow** buried the village and burned its citizens to death almost instantly, compared to the slow suffocation deaths in areas to the south. When the flow cooled and hardened, Herculaneum was entombed in a 60-foot-deep layer of igneous rock.

Three days later, when the last of the ash had fallen from the sky and the tremors had ceased, the Bay of Naples had been changed forever. ■

Important Terms

pumice: Light, porous stone discharged from a volcano.

pyroclastic flow: Volcanic avalanche of pumice, ash, and gases characterized by high temperature and velocity.

Name to Know

Pliny the Elder (a.k.a. **Gaius Plinius Secundus**; A.D. 23–79): Roman author and admiral of the Roman fleet when Vesuvius erupted.

Suggested Reading

Cooley, “Prologue to the Nightmare.”

De Carolis and Patricelli, *Vesuvius, A.D. 79*.

Francis and Oppenheimer, *Volcanoes*.

Gilman, *Ashen Sky*.

Questions to Consider

1. What were the stages of the eruption, and how do Pliny’s letters reveal the sequence of the event?
2. How did the experience of the eruption diverge from different vantage points around the Bay of Naples?

The Bay of Naples after Vesuvius

Lecture 24

“There were some dreadful disasters during [Titus’s] reign, such as the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in Campania. ... In these many great calamities he showed not merely the concern of an emperor, but even a father’s surpassing love, now offering consolation in edicts, and now lending aid so far as his means allowed.”

— Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus

Archaeologists have come to the surprising conclusion that the majority of Pompeians did not perish in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. In 250 years of excavation, only about 1,000 victims’ remains have been found, out of a population of more than 25,000 in the affected area. So where did these thousands of refugees go? And how did the imperial government handle them?

Titus Vespasianus Augustus was Rome’s emperor in A.D. 79. In the two short years of his reign, he dealt with four major catastrophes: Vesuvius, a peninsula-wide plague, and two major fires in the city of Rome. Several historians of the period—Suetonius, Cassius Dio, and Tacitus (who had no love for the emperors in general)—report that Titus took personal charge of the recovery efforts in the Bay of Naples, even committing his personal fortune to the cause (the same Roman patrician beneficence we have seen before writ very, very large).

Although it might surprise a modern reader, Titus’s model for this behavior was one of his predecessors, the emperor Nero. Despite Nero’s scandalous, brutal reputation—some of it deserved—his reconstruction of Rome after the Great Fire of A.D. 64 became the playbook for Titus’s response to the disaster.

Suetonius tells us that Titus assigned a senatorial committee to resettle the survivors and used the property of the deceased who had no heirs to finance “the renewal of the afflicted cities.” Of course, Herculaneum and

Pompeii were beyond “afflicted”; they were unrecoverable. So to what does Suetonius refer?

We know from Pliny’s letters to Tacitus that frantic crowds flooded the roads out of the Bay of Naples both during and shortly after the eruption. We also know from the archeological evidence of a great deal of construction in northern Campania (Naples, Puteoli, Cumae, Misenum, and Capua) under Titus and his successor, Domitian, in the form of expanded roads, new aqueducts, new amphitheaters, and so forth. Rufus Fears (Professor of Classics at the University of Oklahoma and a lecturer for The Great Courses) has suggested that all of this construction points to the resettlement of Pompeii’s and Herculaneum’s refugees in these cities. **Epigraphy**, the study of inscriptions, has confirmed that characteristic Pompeian names can be found scattered around northern Campania during the late 1st century A.D., although whether these immigrants fled the earthquake or the eruption cannot be determined, and many refugees may have gone farther. (One Pompeian name appears as far away as Spain!)

Despite the scale of the catastrophe, a few people did try to recover property (and perhaps loved ones’ bodies) by digging through the ash and pumice that covered Pompeii. (Herculaneum, covered in 60 feet of solidifying rock, could not be breached with the tools of the era, and no one tried.) One well-preserved tunnel was found leading to a small chamber off the atrium of the House of the Ceii. Some of these tunnelers may have been looters as well; one posteruption graffito mentions Sodom and Gomorrah, yet we have no evidence of Christians and very little evidence of Jews living in Pompeii up to its destruction. Whoever these tunnelers were, there is no evidence of systematic, mass recovery efforts anywhere in the city.

In modern times, Pompeii’s last days dominate our imagination when we think about the city. But what we have recovered from this site tells us about so much more. The information and insights into daily life in the ancient Mediterranean that we have gained are as valuable—arguably, much more valuable—as any ancient statue or gold coin. The ruins of Pompeii stand as a testament to those who created it and to the real lives of real people who lived in this ancient Etruscan, Samnite, and Roman city. ■

Important Term

epigraphy: The study of inscriptions.

Name to Know

Titus Vespasianus Augustus (A.D. 39–81; r. A.D. 79–81): Roman emperor who took personal charge of the restoration efforts after the eruption of Vesuvius.

Suggested Reading

Cooley, “A Broken Sleep.”

Descoedres, “Did some Pompeians Return to Their City after the Eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in AD 79?”

Ling, “Pompeii after the Eruption.”

Questions to Consider

1. For a government without a bureaucracy and a new emperor, how well did Rome respond to major disasters like the eruption?
2. How do the extensive excavation and the afterlife of Pompeii demolish the notion of Pompeii as a “city frozen in time”?

Timeline

B.C.

- c. 650.....Founding of Pompeii.
- c. 500.....Sanctuary of Apollo and Triangular Forum established.
- c. 425.....Samnites move into Campania and eventually occupy Pompeii.
- 343–290.....Roman-Samnite Wars.
- c. 150.....Basilica of Pompeii constructed.
- 91–88.....Social War.
- 89.....Sulla lays siege to Pompeii.
- 80.....Founding of Roman colony at Pompeii; construction of Amphitheater and Odeon begun, along with renovation of the Large Theater and the Temple of Jupiter.
- 50.....Greek philosopher Philodemus in residence at Villa of the Papyri, Herculaneum.
- 40.....Decoration of Mysteries Suite in the Villa of the Mysteries.
- 27 B.C.–A.D. 14Reign of Augustus.

A.D.

- 14–37.....Reign of Tiberius.
- 37–41.....Reign of Caligula.

- 40.....Marcus Holconius Macer and Marcus Lucretius Epidius Flaccus elected as *duoviri quinquennales*; Decimus Lucretius Valens and Lucius Albucius Celsus elected as aediles.
- 41–54.....Reign of Claudius.
- 54–68.....Reign of Nero.
- 59.....Riot in the Amphitheater of Pompeii.
- 62.....Campanian earthquake; Nero's Domus Transitoria (Passageway House) is completed in Rome.
- 64.....Nero's Domus Aurea (Golden House) is completed in Rome.
- 69–79.....Reign of Vespasian.
- 79–81.....Reign of Titus
- June 79Temple to Deified Vespasian founded at Pompeii; Sacellum of the Augustales at Herculaneum renovated.
- August 24, 79.....Eruption of Vesuvius.

Modern Period

- 1594.....First material from Pompeii accidentally unearthed.
- 1709.....Well digger strikes the theater at Herculaneum.
- 1734.....Charles named King of Naples and Sicily.
- 1748.....Large-scale excavations begin at what will be recognized as Pompeii.

- 1752.....Villa of the Papyri explored.
- 1759.....Ferdinand IV becomes King of Naples.
- 1813–1815.....Amphitheater and forum at Pompeii excavated.
- 1830.....House of the Faun excavated.
- 1860.....Giuseppe Fiorelli becomes chair of archaeology at Naples and site director at Pompeii.
- 1861.....Unification of Italy.
- 1864.....First Italian tours by Thomas Cook.
- 1894.....House of the Vettii excavated.
- 1924.....Amedeo Maiuri named site director at Pompeii.
- 1943.....Allied bombs hit parts of Pompeii.
- 1961–1984.....Wilhelmina Jashemski excavates at Pompeii.

Glossary

aediles: Local magistrates in charge of infrastructure such as public buildings and road repair.

Altstadt: German for “old town”; here, it refers to the section of Pompeii thought to form the core of its original settlement.

amphitheater: Oval or round building for gladiatorial combat and other spectacles; the name means “double theater.”

apodyterium: Changing room in a Roman bath.

arca: Strongbox, usually made of wood, with an iron lock and iron hardware.

arena: Performance floor of an amphitheater.

ashlar: Large hewn stones of solid rock; at Pompeii, ashlar stones are found in the oldest structures, while later construction used carved plaster over rubble to imitate these blocks.

atrium: Main room in a Roman townhome that was lavishly decorated and where the achievements of the family would be displayed for visitors to see.

Augustalis (pl. **Augustales**): Priest of the imperial cult, usually a freedman, who could use the honor to increase personal prestige through benefactions.

basilica: Roman hall used for law courts, civil administration, and business; characterized by a central hall with flanking aisles and often a porch on one end and a raised tribunal on the other.

caldarium: Hot room in a Roman bath; generally a heated room with a plunge bath of heated water and a separate basin of cold water.

capitolium: Temple to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva that dominated the forum of a Roman colony, generally sited in the center of the short end of a colonial forum.

caupona: Inn, hostel, or tavern.

cavea: Seating area of a theater or amphitheater, always divided into sections by rank.

cella: Part of a Greek or Roman temple that housed the image of the god or goddess.

collocatio: Viewing of the deceased which, for elite Romans, occurred in the atrium of the home.

convergent zone: Point where two tectonic plates meet, as the African Plate and the Eurasian Plate meet near the Bay of Naples; often a seismically and volcanically active area.

curia: Building for the meeting of the local city council.

damnatio ad bestias: Condemnation to the animals as a form of capital punishment, carried out in public, generally as part of spectacle entertainment.

decumanus: The major east-west street in a Roman colony.

decurion: Member of the local town council.

Dionysus: Ancient Roman wine god, one of Pompeii's patron deities.

dipinti: Public announcements, such as campaign posters and advertising for games, painted (versus engraved) on a Roman city's walls. *See graffiti.*

dolia: Large terra-cotta vessels used for wine fermentation, typically holding about 300 gallons of wine. Dolia were buried in the ground up to their rims for temperature control.

domus: Town house; more than a residence, it was the headquarters for an extended family.

duoviri: Senior-level municipal magistracy, held by two men each year.

edicta munera: Painted announcements of upcoming spectacles preserved only at Pompeii, where they reveal the role of gladiatorial games in the local community, the place of politics, and Pompeii's own gladiatorial school.

epigraphy: The study of inscriptions, especially the deciphering and analysis of ancient inscriptions.

Etruscans: Italic, pre-Roman settlers of the Italian Peninsula who had a strong influence on Roman culture and who founded the city of Pompeii.

euergetism: Public patronage and beneficence. This was an essential driver of Roman public building programs and was a way for patrician families to improve their status within a community.

forum: Most important public space in Roman colony; it included buildings and spaces for legal, commercial, civil, and religious activities, most notably government functions.

Forum Boarium: Large former vineyard within the city of Pompeii, near the Amphitheater. Once believed to be a cattle pasture (and so named), excavations have discovered evidence of over 24,000 individual vines, scattered fruit trees, and two outdoor dining areas on the site.

frigidarium: Cold room in a Roman bath consisting of a round cold plunge bath.

fuller's earth: Type of clay with grease-cutting properties used as a form of soap in the ancient world. It is still used today for industrial cleaning and medicinal purposes.

fullones: Wool workers, who formed a wealthy, powerful guild in ancient Pompeii.

fullonica: Establishment where clothes were cleaned and wool was dyed and finished.

graffiti: Public announcements, such as campaign posters and advertising for games, engraved (versus painted) on a Roman city's walls. *See dipinti.*

imagines: Images of distinguished Roman family members in the form of masks displayed in cabinets in the atrium of the *domus* and removed and worn for triumphs, funerals, and major family events.

Jupiter Capitolinus: Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus ("best and greatest") founded on the Capitoline Hill in 509 B.C. and replicated in Roman colonies across the empire.

lararium: Shrine for the household gods.

laudatio: Eulogy for a deceased Roman which was given in the forum by a son or other male family member.

loca publica: Roman legal term for public spaces, such as the forum, theaters, marketplaces, and so forth.

lupanar: Brothel or house of prostitution.

macellum: Market, generally for fish and meat. At Pompeii, it is in the forum.

Mephitis: Italic (and later Roman) goddess of poisonous vapors and noxious odors, associated with Mount Vesuvius and Pompeii from the 6th or 5th century B.C.

ministri Augusti: Priest of the cult of the emperors.

munera: Literally, "gifts"; public spectacles featuring gladiatorial combat originally held at funerals but later expanded to broader presentation.

natatio: Outdoor swimming pool.

negotium: Latin term for work, business, or politics; the opposite of *otium*.

nymphaeum: Dining complex incorporating statues, paintings, and water features.

obsonia: Term used by the Roman author Pliny for still-life paintings of food. The term may derive from gifts of food given to victorious athletes in ancient Greece.

Ostia: Major ancient Roman seaport on the Bay of Naples, partially swamped by the tsunami that followed the earthquake of A.D. 62. Almost all of the grain that fed the city of Rome was imported from Africa through this harbor.

otium: Latin term for leisure; the opposite of *negotium*.

palaestra: Exercise yard generally found as a component in urban bath complexes.

peristyle: Garden surrounded by columns; the central open space in a Roman townhome but found in many other structures as well.

piscina: Fish farm.

pisoliths: Pea-like rounded stones created as volcanic products formed from the aggregation of fine material around a core of condensation.

pompa: Roman ceremonial parade that was an important component of funerals, triumphs, election campaigns, and religious and secular spectacles.

praedium (pl. **praedia**): Property, including land and buildings.

Priapus: Greco-Roman god of fertility and prosperity associated with rural (and later, nouveau riche) Romans.

programma (pl. **programmata**): Painted announcement endorsing political candidates for public office; 2,600 of these have been found painted on the walls of Pompeii.

pumice: Light, porous stone discharged from a volcano.

putti: Images of little boys or cupids.

pyroclastic flow: Hot avalanche of pumice, ash, and gases characterized by high temperature and velocity, caused by the collapse of the eruptive column discharged by a volcano. This phase of Vesuvius's eruption was probably responsible for the majority of deaths.

quinquennalis: Local censor responsible for performing the census every five years.

rostra: Speakers' platform in the forum, named for the bronze rams taken from Punic warships and attached to the front of the platform in the Forum Romanum in Rome.

sacellum: Shrine.

sacerdos publica: Priestess of a public cult.

salutatio: One of the most important Roman political ceremonies, in which a patron would receive his clients at dawn in the atrium and *tablinum*, after which they would escort him to the forum.

Samnites: Ancient Italic people of central Italy who first allied with and then warred with the Romans.

sella curulis (a.k.a. **curule chair**): Folding stool decorated in ivory, granted to magistrates to use while conducting official business as a symbol of office.

Social War: Brutal conflict between 92 and 88 B.C. conducted by the Roman dictator Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix against the Socii, or Roman

allies, who had been the backbone of the Roman army for about 300 years. It led to Roman colonization of *Socii*/Samnite territory, including Pompeii, and secured Roman domination of the Italian Peninsula.

Socii: Non-Roman, Italic allies of the late Roman Republic whose agitation for full Roman citizenship led to the Social War.

***sparsiones*:** Literally, “sprinklings”; gifts of food, goods, or money distributed to the crowds by the patron of a gladiatorial game.

Stoic: School of philosophy based on the Socratic/Platonic ideal that the pursuit of wisdom and virtue is the highest human aim. Seneca the Younger was among its most famous Roman proponents.

***sudatorium*:** Sweating room of a Roman bath, essentially a steam room.

***tablinum*:** Room between the atrium and peristyle or garden of a Roman house that served as an office and reception space for the head of the household.

***tabularium*:** Civic records hall.

***tepidarium*:** Warm water room in a Roman bath.

***thermopolium*:** Tavern serving heated wine and food.

***triclinium*:** Roman dining room of three dining couches for nine diners to recline and dine in a luxurious space.

triumph: Roman parade for a victorious general and army, viewed as the culmination of a military career.

***venationes*:** Games with animals, generally professional animal hunts, although also animal fights that were staged in an amphitheater.

***verna*:** Roman legal term for a woman born into slavery in a household.

Vesuvius: Volcano along the Bay of Naples that erupted in A.D. 79, wiping out the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum and surrounding areas such as Oplontis.

villa: Roman private residence that lay outside city boundaries and was designed for the pursuit of *otium*. A *villa maritima* was a seaside villa modeled after the villa of Scipio Africanus, a *villa rustica* was a working farm villa, and a *villa suburbana* was a villa that lay closer to an urban center and shared architectural features with a Roman townhome. More than simply vacation homes, villas were gathering places for the political and intellectual elite and hubs of Roman culture.

votive pit: Part of a temple where offerings were thrown. These can be gold mines for archaeologists, because they are usually left undisturbed for the temple's entire lifetime and hold artifacts and inscriptions from many generations of worshipers.

xenium (pl. **xenia**): Hospitality gift of food offered to guests. These are often described in poems and depicted in Pompeian wall paintings.

Biographical Notes

Aemilius Celer (fl. 1st century A.D.): Sign painter at Pompeii known from signatures found on his work, namely gladiatorial game announcements.

Aeneas (dates unknown): Legendary founder of Rome; a Trojan refugee who left the burning city with his son, father, and followers and sailed to Italy to establish Rome. His statue stood in a niche in the facade of the building of Eumachia in the forum of Pompeii.

Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.; r. 336–323 B.C.): Macedonian king who conquered the Persian Empire. He served as a model for Roman rulers and elites, who emulated his public image and associated themselves with him through actions and art.

Augustus Caesar (a.k.a. **Octavian**; 63 B.C.–A.D. 14; r. 31 B.C.–A.D. 14) First Roman emperor; nephew and heir of Julius Caesar. He came to sole power after the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at the battle of Actium in 31 B.C.

Aulus Lucius Proculus (fl. 1st century A.D.): Augustalis (priest of the imperial cult) at Herculaneum. His beneficence is recorded with a large marble plaque on display in the headquarters of the cult.

Aulus Vettius Conviva and **Aulus Vettius Restitutus** (fl. 1st century A.D.): Brothers and freed slaves who were the joint owners of the House of the Vettii at Pompeii. They exemplify the commercial success of freed slaves and their role as priests of the cult of the emperors.

Charles VII of Naples (1716–1788; r. 1734–1759; later **Charles III of Spain**, r. 1759–1788): Monarch under whose rule the ruins of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Stabiae were rediscovered and first excavated. The earliest finds formed the core of the royal collection.

Cicero (a.k.a. **Marcus Tullius Cicero**; 106–43 B.C.) Roman author and politician whose voluminous writings inform our understanding of virtually every aspect of the late Roman Republic.

Decimus Lucretius Satrius Valens (fl. 1st century A.D.): Priest of Nero at Pompeii who hosted a lavish set of gladiatorial games in A.D. 50.

Decimus Lucretius Valens (fl. 1st century A.D.): Aedile of Pompeii in A.D. 40, along with Lucius Albucius Celsus. He may be the same man as the Augustalis who hosted the gladiatorial games in A.D. 50.

Eumachia (fl. late 1st century B.C.–early 1st century A.D.): Public priestess of Venus and benefactor to the city of Pompeii. She emulated Livia, the wife of Augustus, in constructing an enormous building complex dedicated to Augustan Harmony and Piety (Concordia Augusta and Pietas).

Ferdinand IV of Naples (1751–1825; r. 1759–1816; later **Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies**, r. 1816–1825): Monarch under whom the major excavations of the Vesuvian lands were undertaken and the finds placed in a major museum. He viewed himself as the new Minerva, patron of the ancient arts.

Fiorelli, Giuseppe (1823–1896): Italian patriot and archaeologist who revolutionized the excavation and presentation of Pompeii after he became the site's director in 1860. He founded the National Archaeological Museum at Naples and created the first plaster casts of victims of the eruption of Vesuvius.

Gaius Petronius Arbiter (d. A.D. 66): Roman author and friend of Emperor Nero, who appointed Petronius the imperial arbiter of taste. His *Satyricon*, a comic novel satirizing the society of the nouveau riche along the Bay of Naples, informs some of the domestic space at Pompeii.

Gaius Quinctius Valgus (fl. 1st century B.C.): Early Roman *duovir* (chief magistrate) of Pompeii responsible for the construction of the Amphitheater and the Odeon and for the renovations of existing buildings to form the public buildings of the Roman colony. He worked with Marcus Porcius.

Gnaeus Pompeius Grosphus (fl. 1st century A.D.): *Duovir* in Pompeii in A.D. 59, along with his son. They were responsible for the gladiatorial games that ended in rioting and many deaths as well as the end of their own political careers.

Jashemski, Wilhelmina (1910–2007): American archaeologist, inventor of landscape archaeology, who excavated and restored the gardens and green spaces of Pompeii and the surrounding villas. Her major breakthrough was the application of Fiorelli's plaster-casting system to root holes, which enabled botanists to identify many of the plant species cultivated at Pompeii.

Julius Caesar (100–44 B.C.; r. 46–44 B.C.): Last in a line of Romans who sought sole control of the Roman state; his victory over his rivals led to the end of the Roman Republic, and his adoption of Octavian led to the beginning of the Principate.

Livia Drusilla (58 B.C.–A.D. 29): Wife of the emperor Augustus, she served as a model for other women and their public roles in the early empire.

Livineius Regulus (fl. 1st century A.D.): Former Roman senator who mounted the disastrous gladiatorial games of 59 A.D. that were the occasion for rioting and bloodshed, leading to his exile and the replacement of the year's officials.

Lucius Albucius Celsus (fl. 1st century A.D.): Aedile of Pompeii in A.D. 40, along with Decimus Lucretius Valens.

Lucius Calpurnius Piso (fl. 1st century B.C.): Roman consul and father-in-law of Julius Caesar; he owned the Villa of the Papyri outside Herculaneum and became a patron of an Epicurean school of philosophy under Philodemus, many of whose works were discovered in the villa's remains.

Maiuri, Amedeo (1886–1963): Italian archaeologist who excavated at Pompeii from 1924 to 1961

Marcus Holconius Macer (fl. 1st century A.D.): *Duovir* of Pompeii in A.D. 40, along with Marcus Lucretius Epidius Flaccus.

Marcus Lucretius Epidius Flaccus (fl. 1st century A.D.): *Duovir* of Pompeii in A.D. 40, along with M. Holconius Macer.

Marcus Porcius (fl. 1st century B.C.): Early Roman *duovir* (chief magistrate) of Pompeii responsible for the construction of the Amphitheater and the Odeon and for the renovations to existing buildings in the city to form the public buildings of the Roman colony. He worked with C. Quinctius Valgus.

Nero (a.k.a. **Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus**; A.D. 37–68; r. A.D. 54–68): Fifth emperor of Rome; he performed as a singer and charioteer in public. His palaces, the Domus Transitoria and the Domus Aurea, were influential examples of interior decoration emulated at Pompeii. The Pompeii earthquake of A.D. 62 and the Great Fire of Rome in A.D. 64 occurred during his rule.

Numerius Popidius Celsinus (fl. 1st century A.D.): 6 year old Pompeian credited with the restoration of the Sanctuary of Isis after the earthquake of 62 A.D. His beneficence led to his inclusion in the local city council.

Octavian: *See Augustus.*

Philodemus of Gadara (c. 110–c. 35 B.C.): Greek Epicurean philosopher-in-residence at the Villa of the Papyri. He was known to Cicero and taught Vergil, among others. His work influenced the Roman poet Horace as well. Much of his work is only known from the papyri preserved from the Villa of the Papyri.

Pliny the Elder (a.k.a. **Gaius Plinius Secundus**; A.D. 23–79): Roman official and author, he was admiral of the Roman fleet at Misenum when Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D. He led a rescue operation during the disaster that resulted in his own death.

Pliny the Younger (a.k.a. **Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus**; A.D. 61/62–c. 113): Roman author and statesman. As a teen, he wrote letters to Tacitus containing an eyewitness account of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. As an adult, he became a Roman governor under Emperor Trajan and author of many works.

Poppaea Sabina (d. A.D. 65): Second wife of Nero and a native of Pompeii. Her marriage led to an outpouring of support for Nero's rule among the Pompeians.

Publius Papinius Statius (A.D. 45–95): Roman poet whose poetry offers vivid contemporary images of villas and villa culture on the Bay of Naples.

Romulus (dates unknown): First king of Rome, credited with founding the city and establishing Rome's traditions of military conquest, triumphal processions, and inclusive citizenship. His statue stood in a niche in the facade of the Eumachia building at Pompeii.

Scipio Africanus (236–183 B.C.): Roman general who defeated Hannibal and won the Second Punic War. He was the first Roman to build a *villa maritima*, establishing a precedent that shaped Roman life on the Bay of Naples for centuries.

Seneca the Younger (4 B.C.–A.D. 65): Stoic philosopher who questioned the place of gladiatorial games in Roman life.

Stephanus (fl. 1st century A.D.): Owner of a *fullonica* (wool-processing shop) on the main street in Pompeii. As a freed slave, he represents the economic and social mobility of this class in ancient Rome.

Sulla (a.k.a. **Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix**; 138–79 B.C.): Roman dictator who besieged Pompeii in the Social War and founded the Roman colony there in 80 B.C.

Tacitus (A.D. 56–c. 120): Roman historian and correspondent of Pliny the Younger; author of two influential and insightful works on imperial Rome, the *Annals* and the *Histories*, which covered Roman history from the death of Augustus to that of Domitian.

Titus Vespasianus Augustus (A.D. 39–81; r. A.D. 79–81): Son of Emperor Vespasian and second Roman emperor of the Flavian dynasty; he took personal charge of the restoration efforts after the eruption of Vesuvius.

Vergil (a.k.a. **Publius Vergilius Maro**; 70–19 B.C.): Generally considered the greatest Roman poet, he studied under Philodemus and lived along the Bay of Naples, which inspired his works.

Vespasian (A.D. 9–79; r. A.D. 69–79): Roman emperor and founder of the Flavian dynasty who was honored after his death with temples at Pompeii and Herculaneum.

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